



HOPE'S MESSENGER

GABRIELLE • E • JACKSON

Francis

25

From
Helen
Christmas
1928



UNIV. OF CALIF. LIBRARY, LOS ANGELES



7/21/84

Hope's Messenger

By
Gabrielle E. Jackson

Author of

"Denise and Ned Toodles" Series

"Little Miss Cricket" Series *"Peggy Stewart" Series*

"Three Graces" Series *"Cap and Capers"* *"Captain Polly" Series.*



Chicago
M. A. Donohue & Company

Copyright 1913
by
M. A. DONOHUE & Co.
CHICAGO

Made in U. S. A.

To Gladys, my dear foster-daughter, and a
loyal friend to the one I love best
of all, this story is most
lovingly inscribed
by
"Aunty J."

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I—WHEN MINUTES SEEM HOURS.....	11
II—AS THE YEARS PASS BY.....	26
III—AN INDOOR PICNIC.....	40
IV—SAITO.....	54
V—THE KENTUCKY CARDINAL'S MESSAGE..	68
VI—HOPE'S WELCOME TO SANS SOUCI.....	85
VII—NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS.....	100
VIII—THE RESCUE.....	116
IX—BEATRICE	131
X—WHEN SEPTEMBER CAME.....	148
XI—BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE.....	163
XII—THE GOBLIN'S CAVE.....	178
XIII—LOOKING BACKWARD.....	194
XIV—SAITO TAKES A HOLIDAY.....	207
XV—"IT RAINS, AND THE WIND IS NEVER WEARY".....	222
XVI—A LITTLE PENITENT.....	236
XVII—EASTER.....	251
XVIII—WHY SAITO FAILED.....	263
XIX—THE SPIRIT OF HINOHIME.....	277
XX—THE PROMISE IS FULFILLED.....	292
XXI—UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.....	305

OUTLINE OF HOPE'S MESSENGER

First Volume of the Hope Series

THE scene of this series is laid in New York City, on the upper West side near Riverside Drive.

In the opening chapter the little heroine, then not four years of age, has met with a terrible accident while crossing the Drive with her nurse. An automobile has run over her, inflicting, what ultimately proves to be a seemingly incurable injury. Her parents and all who know her are nearly heart-broken, for the child, who is beloved by all the neighborhood, possesses the sunniest soul ever housed in a faultless little body. Medical skill is sought throughout the world during that year of torture, but without avail. The child is unable to either sit up or take a step.

An interval of six years elapses before we see her again, during each, strenuous efforts having been made to restore the little girl to health and strength. In the second chapter we find her at ten years of age still helpless, but living a wonderful life in her beautiful home where everything which love can suggest, or great wealth procure, is brought to her bed-side.

Here she spends the greater portion of her time, often subjected to the cruelest suffering, but never losing her sunny, hopeful outlook upon life. Radiating

happiness for others, planning all manner of delights for those upon whom fortune has frowned, filling all her little world with a wondrous joy, and finding good in everything. Never for a moment has she failed to live up to her name of "Hope," firmly believing that she will ultimately be restored to perfect health. She is not a morbidly religious child, but has an abiding faith that her prayer for health will be answered, and answered in some unusual manner. To this belief she has held from the first, because, she says: "I am an Easter child and came with the promise of new life." Not only does she manifest this unfaltering trust in the Father's promise, but has said from the beginning of her suffering that she would be cured in time to see her brother graduate from the Naval Academy at Annapolis, where he is a midshipman at the opening of this story.

But older people are less sanguine, and as the months and years have slipped away their hope has grown fainter. Yet hers has never faltered. That it is justified is ultimately proved. Meanwhile she leads her sweet, sunny life, filled with a thousand interests, and is "just waiting the right time," she says.

It comes just after she is confirmed, and the scene, taken from an actual occurrence of which the author is aware, is certainly one of the latter-day miracles and as beautiful as any ever recorded. She has striven to picture it as simply and beautifully as it actually took place, but this she found a well-nigh impossible achievement.

This story completes the first volume. The second

finds the little patient upon the road to recovery, and pictures all her new world means to her. The third finds health wholly restored and the object of her ambition attained:—to be present on board her brother's ship at some special function, to see him "a really, truly Naval Officer with a chapeau and epaulets and to walk, WALK! beside him, his very sweetest sweetheart."

This brother is ten years her senior, and has ever been her idol and ideal, as the beautiful little golden-haired sister has been his. His devotion to his profession and enthusiasm have infected her also, and their loyalty to Old Glory is a pretty thing, indeed.

Each book consists of twenty chapters of about twenty-four hundred words to each.

The second book will be called "Hope's New World."

The third, "Hope of the Battle Ships."

Hope's Messenger

CHAPTER I

WHEN MINUTES SEEM HOURS

“Birds are singing!
Bells are ringing!
Everything is gay!
This glad Easter day!
This glad Easter day!”

How sweet and clear sounded the voices of the boys' choir singing their joyous Easter carol in the great church on the corner of ——th street and the boulevard.

It was a wonderful Easter day for New York City, for it fell in the middle of April that year, and all the world was blooming.

And Easter day in New York City! What a sight it is! What a panorama of motion, color, perfume; what a scene of contrasts: As though the old world of Christianity had rushed pell mell into the new one.

From the lower East side of the great city, where Germany and Italy burgeon forth in their Easter finery regardless of the season, or the ordering of the Weather Clerk; from the lower West side tenements where Erin's sons foregather, straight up South Fifth Avenue with its teeming French population, to Washington Arch—that mighty barrier between two social worlds—a festive spirit fills the big city. Yes, and on, on, beyond, far up “The Avenue” and all along Riverside Drive, it is one mass of moving color, festive raiment, gaiety, perfume and blossoms.

Vehicles filled with beautifully gowned women, daintily clad young girls, fascinating children, sweet and winsome as pansies, pass to and fro in a seemingly endless stream.

But it is the stroke of high noon which releases the flood-gates of New York's population; at least, its Christian population, to let it pour forth from every church in the vast city, forming a wonderful picture of new life, new hope, and joy—the resurrection—for

high and low, rich and poor; the fulfillment of the Father's promise to his children.

But was it all joy, hope, fulfillment?

There come hours in our lives when our faith is sorely taxed and upon this beautiful Easter morn, with the glad voices of children carolling their Easter hymns, it was hard indeed, for one tortured woman to feel that there *could* be either joy or gladness in the world beyond the open windows of her home, a world so sweet, so fresh, so softly green,—for barely forty-eight hours before the very light of her life seemed extinguished.

It had all happened with such overwhelming swiftness, as such things invariably do: The Swiss nurse was crossing the broad beautiful street upon which the house stood, her charge, to whom she was devoted with a devotion beyond words to convey, prancing along beside her, golden-bronze curls waving in the sunshine, hazel eyes shining with happiness, cheeks glowing with health, and little tongue chattering as only the "Little Daisy Maiden's"

could chatter. The little girl was known by that name to all the neighborhood and a bonny sight she was. Those who knew her, and they were many, were sure of a radiant smile of greeting or some charming words, for the child's vocabulary was a source of marvel to all who knew her, and filled strangers with amazement. Absolutely free from self-consciousness, never shy, beautiful as a painter's model, and always as daintily clad as exquisite taste and unlimited wealth could command, she was known to the neighborhood near and far, and welcomed everywhere as are sunshine, sweet music or a rare fragrance.

And what had forty-eight hours wrought?

That Friday morning a huge motor-car filled with men unworthy the name, and women whom it seemed as though God must have created without souls, had swung around the corner at lightning speed and gone upon its way without pause or thought for the tragedy in its wake.

Good Friday! Long, long ago another

mother's heart had bled and all the world had sorrowed with her.

And now, upon this fair Easter morn, with all the world rejoicing, and voices carolling of new life and joy, a sunny, happy little child lay still and unconscious under the knives of two of the world's greatest surgeons and their attendants, while sweet-faced nurses stood by to aid, and in the room below an anguished mother had thrown herself into the arms of a man whose face was white and set as he held her close and murmured with quivering lips:

“Courage, dear heart, courage.”

How silent the great house. How hushed, how awed in the face of the terrible calamity which had without an instant's warning fallen upon it. Each heart-beat of those waiting in such suspense upon the outcome of that delicate operation above-stairs seemed like a stroke of fate. The striking of the tall clock in the broad hall jarred cruelly upon nerves keyed to the snapping tension. “Time” was indeed counted by “heart throbs” in that

household by those who loved her best, yes, even by the little kitchen maid whom the cook discovered crouched in the pot-closet hugging to her breast the sauce-pan used exclusively for the "Little Mistress' " boullion, and sobbing as though her heart would break.

How slowly time passed. How slowly the hours dragged along that Easter morn. Would there never, never come a sound from that room overhead? Never a message of hope or—oh anything, anything rather than this horrible suspense, dear God!

High noon. Up in St. Stephen's tower the chimes began to ring out their gladsome tidings. "Christ is risen! Christ is risen!"

Overhead a door is softly opened and gently closed. A light footfall treads upon the thickly padded stairs, but the mother-ear is keen; the mother heart responsive to the faintest sound. A white-uniformed nurse enters, and instantly the room is pervaded by a subtle, sickening odor. Never in all the coming years will Mrs. Curtis catch the faintest suggestion

of that odor without a shudder passing over her. She springs from her husband's embrace, stretches forth her hands, but her lips refuse to form the words.

How tenderly sympathetic is the nurse's face as she clasps the outstretched hands, and then placing an arm about the trembling figure leads her to the couch, saying in a voice full of compassion:

"'God is still God, and His faith shall not fail us: Christ is eternal!' She will live. God's message of the day will mean more to you than it ever has before."

Hours have passed, but up in the pretty nursery, so calm, so still, so peaceful the motionless little form still lies upon its snowy bed. On every side are luxury, comfort and wealth to make her happy, but she is oblivious to all. Over near the open window sits the Swiss nurse, holding in her lap the little woolly toy dog; her treasure's pet toy. Would she ever open those wonderful hazel eyes and say in that soft, bird-like voice:

"Lizette, mon cher petit Fugi. Meine liebe Hund. My little, little lovable Fugi. The darling!"

The trained nurse moves quietly about the room. By the bedside sits the mother, white as the silken coverlid laid across her darling, one hand holding the inert little fingers, the other unconsciously toying with the mass of bronze gold lying upon the pillow. One window is open to let in the soft spring air, and presently from beyond it the vesper chimes begin to ring and simultaneously through the open casement floats the sweet vesper hymn:

"Our hearts be pure from evil
That we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal
Of resurrection-light:
And, listening to His accents,
May hear so calm and plain
His own 'all hail' and hearing
May raise the victor strain."

As the soft strains died away there was a gentle sigh from the colorless lips and a faint

fluttering of the eyelids. Then they were raised and the wonderful hazel eyes looked up into those bending, hovering, yearning above them. Gradually, calmly, as life and color creep into the morning sky, the light of returning consciousness and recognition crept into the child's eyes. The perfect lines of the cupid's bow curved slightly upward and a weary little voice whispered:

"The Daisy, Daisy—mai—maiden is so tired, chérie. So—so—sleepy. The chimes are telling her about 'Sleepy—sleepy-town.' Sing for her, chérie, and when—when she wakes up she'll—be—be—all well and better."

Instantly the Swiss nurse was kneeling upon the floor at the further side of the bed, her eyes streaming as she tried to articulate.

"Ma petite, oh, ma petite, come back to our world! Come back to your Lizette and Fugi."

The nurse drew near, holding up a warning hand, and saying gently:

"Hush."

"Lizette. *My* Lizette, my Fugi, please," and one little arm strove to reach for her treasure. The nurse nodded reassuringly and said, "All is well," then bending added:

"Just a little drink for the Daisy Maiden; so cool and refreshing."

It was taken with a smile.

"Now cherie, 'The train for Sleepy-town,' please."

Mrs. Curtis slipped to her knees by the bedside, leaned close to the white face upon the pillow and began to sing in a voice which had once held St. Stephen's congregation entranced:

"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me:

Bless Thy little one tonight:

Through the darkness be Thou near me,
Keep me safe till morning light."

How tenderly the voice vibrated. With what intense appeal each softly articulated word was uttered. If ever earnest prayer ascended to the throne Divine one did in that childish hymn.

At the first notes a man's footfall crossed the

hall from the room upon the further side of the corridor. It fell noiselessly upon the rich rug and the singer was unaware of his presence until his hand was laid tenderly upon her shoulder. A slight tremor passed over her graceful and still girlish form, but there was no break in the notes. The little girl upon the bed stirred slightly, opened her eyes and just whispered the word:

“Daddy.”

Then sleep—the natural, restorative sleep of returning life and health claimed her and she journeyed away into the land of oblivion where pain is unknown.

The nurse came to Mrs. Curtis’ side.

“She will, no doubt, sleep for several hours now. It is very necessary that she should; that no sound or motion disturb her. You have had no rest for hours. Mr. Curtis, will you take your wife to her own apartments, let her maid undress her and insist upon a few hours rest? I shall not release my vigilance here for a single moment. Miss Woodward will give

me all needed assistance and Lizette is at hand. Dr ——'s assistant will be here each hour to receive my report. If the slightest change takes place you shall be called instantly. So believing no news to be good news, will you try to rest? You have not done so since Friday morning and this cannot go on."

The nurse paused, her sweet smile most persuasive.

"Miss Forrester is right, Violet. Be persuaded, dear. Come with me. Our little one is in safe hands."

"But you, Raymond. You have had no rest either. But how *can* I leave her, dear?"

Oh, the pathos in that question!

"Will you both rest, or must I summon Dr. Hartmann?" asked the nurse, smiling warningly. Dr. Hartmann was the family physician whose home was but a few doors further down ——th Street and who had been hastily summoned that fatal morning, and who, in turn, had as hastily summoned the two great surgeons in consultation.

"Come Violet," said Mr. Curtis.

With an inarticulate little cry the mother bent forward, caught one of the golden-bronze curls in her hand and pressed her lips passionately to it. Not for a thousand worlds would she have touched that dear face with her lips lest even love's message disturb its perfect tranquility.

Then leaning upon her husband's arm she went slowly from the room, again and again turning yearning glances toward the brass bedstead where lay her very life.

Lizette wiped her streaming eyes and whispered:

"It would mean my lady, too, if the little one went."

"She will not go, but we have a long, hard battle to fight, good Lizette. Now lie down on that couch and get an hour or two's rest. I do not need you now, but there will be many steps to be taken later. You have been so faithful, so devoted."

"And—yes—why not? Ma Petite—mine

she has been since the trained nurse left when she was one year old. More than three years ago—yes—and in all three no badness—no—what you call? L'enfant gate—ze pure cussed-ness you see in zees American children with all ze worl' to command. Non-non! Always ze sweetness, ze sunlight, ze graciousness and—and ze dignity—ze moaither and ze father—ze two as one. My leetle one. You *safe* her! You make her to be all she was three days ago. You with le bon Dieu's help!"

Lizette clasped the nurse's hands and looked beseechingly into her eyes.

"Yes, with God's help and the surgeon's skill. But, remember, the battle will be a long one and patience will be taxed. Now you can help best by obeying me just as Mr. and Mrs. Curtis have done, for if I need you I shall need all you can give me of love and sound sense."

"I do as you say, Mademoiselle. Mrs. Curtis bid me obey you in all things. I go to do so. I sleep," and utterly worn out with sorrow, anxiety and watching the faithful

woman cast herself upon the couch and ere five minutes had passed was slumbering soundly.

The nurse returned to her patient's side. The little child still slept, yet not one degree of vigilance was relaxed. Miss Forrester had chosen her profession from love, not necessity. A gentlewoman by birth and breeding, straight from a home of luxury, this work had been undertaken because neither medical skill nor the most careful nursing had been able to hold from the Great Beyond the one to whom she was to have been married within a month. He was a young physician and had given his life for a patient. He always seemed very near to her when she was working over a critical case.

CHAPTER II

AS THE YEARS PASS BY

Easter days, yes, six, have come and gone since the one told of in the opening chapter. The one which held such anguish for Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, and all within that home as well as many, many beyond its walls. Also for a lad at a famous military school up the Hudson, the brother of the little patient. He had not been sent for; at the time of the accident it had seemed best not to send; every moment was so very precious and all energies were centered upon the one whose life hung suspended by a hair. He had been notified at once and his anguish had been cruel. He was to have come home for that Easter week and in the drawing of a breath all was changed. It was deemed wisest to let him spend the holidays with a friend in Briarcliff, there to receive almost

hourly messages. He was nine years his sister's senior and no other children had come between, and the lad's love for her was a source of wonder for all who saw them together. The previous Fall he had been sent to Forest Heights Academy to prepare for Annapolis, for since a tiny child the Navy had been to him his Lode Star.

His parents had not approved the choice; there seemed a much broader field for their only son in the line of his father's profession, that of Patent Law, in which he had made an enviable name for himself, but they were too wise to combat his predilections, realizing that a lad's viewpoint may change many times between six and sixteen. But from a tiny child the sight of the great battleships swinging at their anchors upon the broad reaches of the Hudson at the foot of his street had thrown the small man into a perfect frenzy of enthusiasm, and as long as they held their anchorage there he fairly hovered upon the Riverside Drive. More than once he had gone aboard

when his parents went as guests of some of the officers, who were not long in discovering the secret of his enthusiasm. It was considered a good joke among them to send a boat ashore for the "Future Admiral," as they dubbed him, and beg his mother to hand him over for an hour or two. And what hours they were to the eight-year-old boy!

But all this happened before the little Daisy Maiden entered the world. He was nearly ten when she came. He was nearly fourteen when she was injured; a fine, self-contained, manly little chap, and adored by the Easter sister, for she had entered his world upon an Easter day which had come much earlier in the season than the one which had brought sorrow rather than gladness. A little March baby, whose birthstone was the Bloodstone of Courage and Loyal Affection, and whose birth color was the rosy pink of her own soft cheeks.

They named her Hope because to them she was the living incarnation of Hope. As she

grew older they realized that they might with equal fitness have named her Faith or Charity, for she seemed to typify all three virtues. Had she been born in the days of her Puritan ancestors she might have been named Love. That also would have suited her, for she instantly won the love of all with whom she came in contact.

And the six Easter days which have passed since the events told of in the opening chapter?

What milestones of the six years they had been! Never from that wonderful Sunday morning to the one now drawing near, had the little Daisy Maiden stepped foot upon the floor. For a time none save the physicians and nurses realized the gravity of the case, or its seeming hopelessness, and even they, in spite of their scientific knowledge and judgment refrained from whispering the terrible conviction which each day was strengthening. She was taken abroad during the first year and the finest surgical skill of the continent was engaged, and becoming intensely interested,

concentrated their efforts to bring about the restoration of health to the beautiful child with whom everyone promptly fell in love. But nothing had availed. The hip so cruelly crushed, the limb so shortened did not yield to their treatment. The little back was too weak to remain in an upright position long.

All that science could do or wealth command ministered to the little patient every hour of the day and night. She was never alone a moment and the devotion of parents, physicians, brother or hirelings invariably incited the wonder of all who witnessed it.

And now another Easter draws nigh in the lovely home in West —th Street, and we'll peep into it to see the Daisy Maiden after six years of helplessness. She is still called by that name, given her by an old Quaker gentleman whose home is upon the opposite side of the street, because she had almost invariably brought to him either a cluster of the wild daisies gathered from their nooks and crannies along Riverside Drive when she

walked there with Lizette, or the marguerites from the Florist's shop on Columbus Avenue. She loved these flowers of the sunshine beyond all others and because of her passion for them had been given the name of "The Daisy Maiden."

The entire third floor of the great house was given over to the little girl and her attendants. The large room with its bowed window overlooking the broad street, was turned into a sunny bower where flowering plants drank in the sunshine, and birds piped and sang. This was the altar of that household, for in it stood the wonderful iron cot upon which Hope spent the greater part of her life. It was a cot especially designed for her needs. It could be converted into almost anything from a swing to a carriage, for it had braces and suspending swings; rubber-cushion wheels to run it thither or yonder; an adjustable table—oh, more than a page could describe—yet all so hidden by lovely pink

draperies that one never guessed all its possibilities.

And there it could stand in its sunny window or be rolled into a little curtained alcove if the beloved patient grew weary or wished to sleep.

And the room itself! Could anything be lovelier? The floor was of some wonderful highly polished wood, almost white in color and upon it lay beautiful rose-colored rugs, made especially for this room. The furnishings were white enameled wood or white wicker with rose upholstering. The walls were done in panels of the most delicate pink. The hangings were of the most exquisite silks or fairy-like lace. The electric fixtures of silver with skillfully contrived shades of artistic stained glass. The fireplace and mantel of white and silver.

And everywhere palms, growing plants, bowls of gold fish, birds in cages, and in one corner a superb macaw, white as driven snow excepting his rose-colored crest, sat upon his

silver bar. On the cushion beside the hearth slept a white Persian cat. Beside the little invalid's cot lay a snowy Russian Poodle, rare as priceless, each adorned with rose-colored bows upon their collars. Ah, it was a wonderful study in white and rose that beautiful sunny room, and from it opened a little conservatory, suspended almost like a Moorish balcony, for the house had a rare luxury for a city house,—a side garden. Mr. Curtis had declined to sell the twenty feet of land which lay at the West side of it in spite of the almost incredible sums offered him, or the accusation of being “a short sighted idiot not to sell when the land was worth its weight in gold.” That might be, but the little daughter lying up there in her fairy palace was worth a thousand times more to him than all the land on the globe, and he meant to keep that space free for the Western sunlight to flood her windows, for the Western sunsets to paint their glowing colors over the Palisades across the big river; for the evening star to peep in

upon her, or the crescent moon to hang its silver sickle for her delight; for the majestic river to flow by, and above all, bear upon its bosom the stately battleships, for ere long Raymond Curtis, Jr., would be upon one of them. He was now at Annapolis a second classman. During the coming year he would graduate, at least, during the next academic year.

So the land was never sold and the outlook from the western window remained as it had been when Mr. Curtis built his home.

And the other rooms on that floor? Next the living-room was the bed-room, all a soft pearly white and gold like the Daisy Maiden herself, for the cheeks which had once been so round and rosy were less round after six-years of invalidism, though the rich golden bronze hair was as wonderful—yes, *more* wonderful—than ever. Beyond the bed room was a model bathroom and beyond that another room filled with the most bewildering collection of toys—toys bought or sent from

every country producing them. Then other rooms for the attendants, the two trained nurses for day and night duty, and Lizette's room. Only one more room remains to be described. It is separated from the others by double doors. It's floor, walls, ceiling are all of spotless white tiling. It's light comes from above. It's furnishings? Alas! From the luxury of a wonderful home we step into the operating room of a hospital. All too eloquently does it tell its story of the life of the lovely little girl lying upon the wheeled cot in the sunny window. If human love can minister to comfort and give delight, it must at times subject its object to torture also. But we will not dwell upon that. We will keep to our sunny window and try to see only the sunny side of this little child born to life's greatest luxuries, tenderest love and ceaseless devotion but burdened with incessant pain and often the cruelest suffering. Nor can we ask "Why?" Perhaps the answer will come as the story goes on.

It is ten o'clock on Saturday morning. The month is April. The morrow will be Easter. The day is gloriously clear and sunny, and so mild that the windows are raised, and the filmy lace curtains are swaying in the soft spring wind. Beyond them the trees have budded into a delicate green over night, the result of a gentle April shower. The city sparrows are chirping madly, quarreling, as usual, over their domestic affairs.

Up from the river rises a salty tang for the tide is flowing in from the bay. Down in the broad street all is a stirring bustle of pending events, for all must be in readiness for the morrow. Tradesmen's wagons are hurrying to and fro, delivering the morning marketing. Florists' wagons, laden with gorgeous flowering plants or boxes of cut flowers are hastening from house to house, while small itinerant flower merchants carrying their trays of daffodils, narcissi, violets, roses, or marguerites, are offering their wares to every passer-by, meanwhile keeping "one eye batted for de

cops," for, alack! street vendors are not popular with that fraternity.

Interspersed with all this pleasant bustle are the tooting honkings, or wailing horns of the innumerable motor cars speeding up and down, for —th Street is a broad one and a popular highway to the Drive a few hundred feet beyond.

All has a festive air of joyous anticipation as though all the world were upon the alert for some great event.

And up in that sunny window?

The silken draped cot is drawn close to them,—it is one of the little Daisy Maiden's "easy days." The perfect mechanism of the cot enables her to lie in almost any position. Today it is swinging gently like a luxurious hammock and is slightly raised in order that she may look down into the street. Over the white embroidered down pillow the golden curls lie in luxuriant masses of heaped-up spun gold, the lovely smiling face resting against the mass of curls. The wonderful

eyes of the softest, deepest hazel are alight with pleasure; the perfect lips smiling their rare smile revealing the faultless teeth. The pretty hands upon the couch cover are filled with flowers; marguerites and violets which harmonize wonderfully with the white and gold-embroidered Japanese kimono the little invalid wears. Just at hand on a small table stands a telephone made of aluminum, of feather-weight for weak hands to hold. At that very moment its silvery bell tinkles its summons and with a bright smile Hope raises it, lifts off the receiver and holds it to her ear. A soft little laugh bubbles to her lips as she listens to the speaker at the other end of the line.

“Yes, in my window, of course. Looking out at all the people passing and the flowers. In an hour? The same thing maybe. Really? Lovely! What shall I order? Let it be a surprise? Good! Mother? She has gone over to St. Stephen’s to take my posies for me. I can hear the choir boys practicing their carols this minute. Yes, she will be back soon and I will

tell her. We'll have a really-truly picnic, shall we Daddy? Right here in Ruhevoll. I'll count the minutes and be all ready when you come. Yes. Good-by. Good-by."

The little receiver was clicked back upon its rack and the sweet voice called:

"Oh, Lizette! Lizette! Come quickly! Such a message from Daddy. He will be up for luncheon and we are to have it right here—a really-truly-make-believe picnic. Please call Miss Forrester. She will be sure to have some wonderful surprise suggestion to make. She always has."

A moment later the trained nurse entered the room. The same who had entered the home six years before. How little she had changed. She is not the type of woman upon whom years tell. The same gentle gracious manner; the same tranquility; her presence a benediction.

CHAPTER III

AN INDOOR PICNIC

"Well, little sunshiny lady, what can I do for you?" asked Miss Forrester, as she came to the side of the cot and laid her hand caressingly upon the golden head.

Hope smiled up at her as she answered:

"What do you think? Daddy had just phoned that he will be home in time to take luncheon with me, right up here in Ruhevoll! Isn't that lovely?"

"Very, but he has managed to do that now and again," smiled Miss Forrester. "About twice a week, eh? But the event never palls, does it, dear?"

"How could it? He is Daddy, you know, and such a busy one, too. I often wonder how he spares the time," and Hope wagged her

head as though the question were too momentous for her to solve.

"And do you think there is anything in this world which 'Daddy' would not try to compass for the little lady of Ruhevoll, or fail to make time for? But tell me what can I do for you this time, for I judge it is to be a very special occasion because it is an Easter celebration, if just a few hours ahead of time."

"Why yes, Daddy said, 'We'll have a regular, old-fashioned picnic,' and I want to surprise him by really having one. Now how can we? A really, truly picnic, as though we were out in the woods eating our luncheon under the trees? You know people really do have such picnics, and though I have never been to one myself I know all about them, because Beatrice told me about one she went to up at Lenox last fall. It must have been truly wonderful. Why just think, Miss Forrester, there were twenty boys and girls, and they went up into the mountains and played all sorts of games, and their luncheon was

spread on a big white cloth right on the grass beneath the trees. Don't you think that would be great fun? And you know that some day, yes, before so very, very long, I am going to do such things, too. I shall not have to lie here always. Just a little while longer. Aren't you glad?" and one hand reached up to clasp the nurse's firm, white one and carry it to her cheek.

"That will be the proudest and happiest day of my life, honey," but Miss Forrester turned quickly to look out of the window, for her eyes had grown suddenly dim.

It had always been the same optimistic outlook. Never during the six, long helpless years of suffering and patient waiting had there ever been any other. "In just a little while" had been the epitome of Hope's gospel. Or "when the right time comes." The child seemed obsessed with the idea that at a given time health and strength would be restored, by some means quite out of the ordinary. It was a strange hope, an unfaltering trust, but

since she was an Easter child it must be realized. And thus the years had passed by,—dragged by, for those whose hope and faith were less vital, but had slipped by for the little girl waiting so patiently, yet often in such cruel suffering. Never one word of complaint, never a trace of rebellion at the cruel fate which held her a helpless prisoner while her companions were enjoying their rightful heritage of childish frolic and freedom. How she found sunshine, pleasure and, yes, even humor in her shadow world of pain was a constant source of marvel to all who knew her. But the fact remained that she did. Not only found them herself but contrived to share them with others. The six years had been one long record of her ability to do so.

“How soon will Mr. Curtis be here, dear?”

“Between twelve and one, he said. Have you a plan?” asked Hope eagerly.

“Let me put on my thinking cap,” cried Miss Forrester, catching up a funny Japanese head-dress which one of Hope’s many friends

had sent her, and adjusting it upon her immaculate white cap.

Hope cried out: "Oh, you have crushed your dear, dainty cap!"

"Then I'll find a fresh one, but I must have a thinking cap," laughed the nurse.

"Miss Forrestaire look like ze Chinese goddess of what you say? Get ze luck?" commented Lizette. But Miss Forrester was sitting opposite the cot, her chin in her cupped hands and a most introspective look upon her face.

Hope pressed her finger to her lips to enjoin silence, lest a wonderful thought be lost. The next moment Miss Forrester sprang from her seat, clapped her hands, tossed the thinking cap upon the table and cried:

"I have it and we can do it beautifully!"

"Oh, what? What is it?" was Hope's eager question.

"Count one hundred very slowly and by that time I'll be back to tell you," laughed Miss Forrester, as she hurried from the room.

"Oh, Lizette, I think she's a perfect dear, don't you? She is so clever at thinking up delightful things."

"Oui, certainement! And why not? It is pour ma cherie," was Lizette's reply, as though there were no further room for argument.

"And now I must count."

Slowly the words dropped from the soft lips:

"One — two — three," until one hundred had been counted. At the last word Miss Forrester re-entered the room followed by Saito, the Japanese butler, and Michael, the general handy-man of the household. Saito almost kowtowed before the occupant of the cot. To his Japanese, beauty-worshipping soul this room was a shrine which held the imprisoned spirit of a goddess. She was too beautiful, too adorable, far too perfect in his sight to be a mere, suffering little child. But to the big Celt she was "Wan av the holy saints, sure," and Michael was prepared for any miracle. She was a fitting object of

miracles, and the good soul had more than once held forth upon that fact in the servant's hall below stairs. So, while Saito was bowing and wishing the honorable one untold joys and blessings, and Michael was saying in his honest Hibernian:

"God love ye and saints rest ye, what kin Michael be doin' fer ye, darlint?" Miss Forrester was rapidly talking to Saito, whose little black eyes snapped with comprehension.

"Yes, yes. I run to the telephony, in five-ten—minute I have Kozo San, then we mage all same like forest,—tree—bush—flower, bird—yes, so beau-ti-ful for Yoshi-Ko (the lovable lady). Then we run to mage the peek-neek for Curtis-Sama and the Okka-san (the honorable mother). Yes, all so queek. Mech-al he do the great move. Ah?" and away flew the little Jap to the telephone, where, having gotten his call, he was presently jabbering away volubly in his native tongue, and, as events proved, to some purpose, for within half an hour there arrived upon the scene the

desired "Kozo-San," and with him great sprays of cherry blossoms, flowering quince and forsythia. Then began a transformation. The pink rugs were taken up and replaced by a large, moss-green one from another room. Tall palms, great rubber plants, blossoming azaleas, marguerites, spirea, tulips, daffodils and hyacinths appeared as by magic. The bird cages were suspended from the rubber plants, fluffy rabbits which had lived in the play room (alas, almost misnamed) peeped out from beneath clumps of fern in the most realistic manner, as though spying upon the human beings who had invaded their bosky haunts. The macaw chattered from a thicket of palms. In short, the living room, under Saito's magical directing and the ready co-operation of Michael, Kozo, Miss Forrester and Lizette, was transformed into a sylvan retreat, and Hope was in an ecstasy of delight.

Then all that remained was to find a resting place for fairy queen, and this Saito's fertile brain promptly compassed. Cushions were

placed beneath a bower of palms, and the mattress from the cot laid upon them.

When all this was accomplished, Saito proceeded to decorate his little goddess with cherry-blossoms, and a wonderful picture she made as she rested there. Titania in her bower could not have been lovelier.

"And now, Saito mage the tiffin to be alaready so time Curtis-sama's car pershoo-pershoo up to gutter-stone. Yes, me, Saito! Kozo-San can help, but Saito mage," and away he sped.

It was striking twelve-thirty when Mr. Curtis' "pershoo-pershoo" car rolled silently up to the "gutter-stone." He glanced up at the window where he hoped to see the beloved face watching for him, and a slight apprehension overspread his own when he failed to see it, but Saito had the door open before he could mount the steps, and his smiling countenance dispelled the master's alarm.

"Ahayo! Ahayo! Saito take Curtis-sama's honorable coat? Will the honorable one's

honorable feet make haste to fly to the Takamiya above?*" The Yoshi-Ko waits."

Mr. Curtis smiled, thanked the little man and let his own "honorable feet" bear him up stairs. At the head Mrs. Curtis met him. She had not been allowed to enter Ruhevoll, and was as impatient as a girl for the surprise which she had been told awaited her and Mr. Curtis there. Saito followed quickly to attend to his master's needs. This took but a few moments and then, with great ceremony, many bows and beaming smiles, he ushered Mr. and Mrs. Curtis up to Ruhevoll, where Miss Forrester greeted them and a cheery voice from within called:

"Oh, Daddy, Mother, come quickly! Come quickly! And isn't it lovely?"

Beneath the palms lay Hope. Near her was spread a snowy cloth and upon it stood as ideal a picnic luncheon as ever could have been placed beneath forest boughs. Even the picnic hamper was at hand, for Saito had

*Saito's translation of Ruhevoll.

omitted nothing to make everything realistic for his little Hinohime (his Princess of the Sun), as he often called her, and Saito himself was at hand to serve the feast, arrayed in white duck, spotless and immaculate.

"Why, what is all this? Where are we?" cried Mr. Curtis, as he bent down to kiss the radiant face beneath the palms.

"This is fairy-land, Daddy. A transformation in your honor—and Mother's, too," she added quickly. "You must sit here beside the picnic spread and we'll all make believe. Come Miss Forrester, you are a pick-nicker, too, you know. Isn't it lovely? Miss Forrester and Saito and Michael and—and—oh, everybody did it. What should we do without Saito. Ah, Saito, you must not go back to Japan. No. You will not."

An odd expression flashed for one second across the face of the little Japanese butler. Then it was gone. No one noticed it, and he smiled and bowed as he said:

"Saito no can go while Yoshi-Ko stay. He

must pray to Jizo (the kind god who helps children across the river of death) to make some absence. The honorable god find plenty do somewhere else," and Saito pointed vaguely toward the window. His hearer's little guessed that he was even then beseeching Jizo to betake his honorable self into some quarter of the world where the passing of a child would not, could not, mean what it would mean if Jizo called this one. "Saito no can mage alive some more unless in Taka-miya with Amaterasie no Oho-Kami. (In the high shrine of his Sun-goddess.)

"Oh, Saito, how shall I ever learn those wonderful Japanese words? You must tell me what they mean. Will you write them down for me?"

"For surely. Some day. Velly soon. Now must mage the hurry to serve the honorable Okka-san," and Saito passed a delicious dish to Mrs. Curtis, resting beneath the macaw's cage, her pillow piled high about her.

"This is the most wonderful picnic I have

ever attended. We are much indebted to all who helped arrange it for us," she said.

For more than an hour the unique picnic brought joy to the little invalid and happiness to those who shared her pleasure. Miss Forrester, however, was constantly on the alert for signs of fatigue in her patient. The feast had nearly ended and she was about to suggest that her charge had been allowed about as much excitement as was prudent, when she was called from the room by the assistant nurse, and was detained longer than she expected to be.

Meanwhile, in the indoor bower, Saito had just passed to Mrs. Curtis a most amazing creation which caused her to ask:

"Ah, Saito, have you invoked some magical power to create this wonderful dish?"

"Ah, no! No made magic. Ill omen of the Hinohime. Ad Japan we mage this dish for the great princess, her imperial majesty. Okka-san mage try?" and Saito bowed deeply.

Mrs. Curtis had just conveyed to her plate a most realistic bird's-nest, in which two fluffy birds nestled, when a soft sigh caused her to turn toward's Hope's couch. The little girl had quietly fainted.

CHAPTER IV

SAITO

In the consternation which followed upon Hope's fainting turn, no one noticed the indescribable horror depicted upon Saito's face. It became ashen gray; the peculiar, uncanny gray of the native of the far East, unknown to the Caucasian complexion.

Hope was immediately taken into her sleeping-room and everything done for her that skill or science could command, and within a short time was restored to consciousness. Though weak and crushed as one of the tall Easter lilies which, in the confusion of removing her to her room, had been overturned and broken.

Saito now stood in the middle of the deserted room and regarded the pretty little bower, so lately the scene of such happiness.

What was passing in his Oriental mind? Saito had been in Mr. Curtis' employ nearly a year, taking the place of a former Japanese butler, who had been called home to Japan to serve his allotted time in the army. The change had been very unexpected, nor could Matsuyo in the least understand his recall. He had been with Mr. Curtis ever since Hope was born, was devoted to the family and the child, and greatly distressed at the thought of leaving them. Nevertheless, it was the order of the Mikado, and, oddly enough, coincident with Matsuyo's recall, Saito applied for the position, and that fact had puzzled Mr. Curtis not a little. So far as he knew not a soul outside of his own family and Matsuyo knew of the pending change. Mr. Curtis was a clever man, exceptionally able in his profession, and in very close touch with the most prominent men of his country, especially those in diplomatic and official circles. As an able patent lawyer, his services were much sought, and many an important matter known only to

government circles came to his knowledge. But notwithstanding his professional cleverness, in private life he was as unsuspecting and guileless as a child. That there could have been the slightest co-ordination in the sudden recall of Matsuyo and the appearance of Saito never occurred to his Occidental mind, and, man of high intellectual attainments though he was, the working of the Oriental mind was beyond his comprehension, for truly "the West and the East can never meet." So Matsuyo, sorely against his inclination, went back to Japan, and Saito, who had come with exceptional recommendations, was installed in his place.

All this had happened the previous May, and during those eleven months a most extraordinary change had taken place in Saito.

At first he was singularly reserved and taciturn, though invariably most deferential and punctilious in the performance of his duties. Indeed, in many ways he surpassed Matsuyo, inasmuch as Saito seemed to possess

finer feeling, a more correct idea of the little courtesies of life. In short he seemed of much higher caste than Matsuyo, though the latter's disposition and tireless devotion to his employers, especially to his Etsu-Ko, as he often called Hope (his little lady of delight), had made his services a joy to the entire household. Saito proved equally attentive to Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, but owing to the fact that Hope had been very ill during the first month of his service he had not even seen her. Then, one glorious June morning she had been pronounced strong enough to be taken out in the big motor car for a breath of air from the river she so loved and the smooth-running Packard drew up to the door. To Saito and good Michael was intrusted the litter to be carried down to the motor car.

When Saito entered Ruhevoll for the first time and saw the golden-haired child lying in the sunshine, the beautiful, almost ethereal, little face smiling up at him, he stopped as suddenly as though petrified. Although some-

what puzzled by his conduct, Hope attributed it to his awe of her helplessness, for the Japanese have strange superstitions concerning sickness. Hope had gathered something of this from Matsuyo. So, thinking to overcome his dismay, she raised one hand and held it toward him, as she smiled and said in her soft, sweet voice:

"You are Saito? · I have not seen you before; Ohayo Saito-San." (Good morning, honorable Saito, a Japanese form of kindly address toward a menial.)

The effect astonished every one in the room: Down dropped Saito flat upon the rug in front of Hope, prostrating himself as he would have done before one of his Buddhist deities, uttering a perfect jumble of Japanese words.

Accustomed as she had been from earliest childhood to the extravagant demonstrations of the Japanese, this was a little beyond anything she had experienced, and Hope was embarrassed.

"Oh, Saito, please get up. You know we

hardly understand your Japanese manners in America," she said, motioning the little man to his feet, and in so doing her hand accidentally touched his head. Instantly he caught the edge of the silken rug which covered her feet and bowing again to the floor pressed it to his forehead, as he murmured:

"Hai-yaku-hai. Oho-hiru-me no muchi!" ("A hundred bows! a heaven-illumined one!") For to Saito's Oriental mind here was the visible incarnation of his Sun Goddess, and the significance of her presence in this household can only be understood as the story proceeds. Why she had chosen to appear there in the guise of a sick child was not for him, Saito, to even presume to guess. She *was* there, and while the blind barbarians who sheltered her might see in her only their invalid daughter, he, Saito, knew better. Those of the Shinto faith were wiser than the stupid To-gin. (Despicably ignorant foreigners.)

Yes, she was surely his Hinohime-Ko (his

honorable Sun Princess), and as such commanded his absolute reverence and obedience.

From that moment had dated Saito's tireless, almost embarrassing service. Hope could hardly draw a breath unwatched by him, and more than once Mrs. Curtis had been tempted to ask her husband to dismiss the man, his omnipresence at times so disturbed her, and she feared it might worry Hope. Then some little, thoughtful act upon Saito's part would cause her to repent of her prejudice, and so the time had gone on.

Of course during the eleven months of his service, Hope had passed through more than one day of distressing suffering, or had fainted from exhaustion or excitement, but never had Saito happened to be present as upon this occasion. And now he stood in the deserted room the very picture of overwhelmed horror. Then like lightning came the change as his eyes fell upon the potted purple hyacinths and the azaleas. With a low, animal-like cry, he pounced upon them, swept them pell-mell

into a huge tray and fled from the room like a shadow. Five minutes later not a vestige of those baleful blossoms remained to testify that they had ever graced Taka-miya, and in his own room, never entered by any of the other servants of the household, Saito was burning incense to invoke the intervention of Ebisu and Dai-Koku (the gods of luck), because the purple flower of evil omen and the azalea of ill luck had been placed in the room where, for her own august reasons, the Sun Princess had deigned to assume human form, and while in that form, submit to the ills of mortals.

Then Kwannon (the goddess of Mercy) was implored to forgive the honorable ignorance of these barbarians since literally they were as blind as a tiger's cub. It was a strange ceremony but vitally significant to Saito.

Hope's indisposition was soon remedied with rest, and in the deeper interests of ministering to her, no thought was given to the disappearance of the azaleas and purple hya-

cinths, and when Saito, immaculate and imperturbable as ever, served Mr. and Mrs. Curtis' dinner at seven o'clock, none would have suspected the fury and emotion which barely a few hours before had dominated the little man, nor had they suspected it, could they have possibly gauged the cause.

But even while serving his master and mistress Saito, apparently impassive, expert to a degree, seeing and anticipating every need, moving with the silence of a shadow, was inwardly a seething crater of conflicting emotions, for that day had been a red-letter one for him. He, by the grace of the gods, had seen and understood that which these uncouth foreigners could not possibly grasp, and henceforth he was destined to be nearly torn asunder by his desire to obey the orders of one in high authority in the Japanese government and his duty to the gods of his faith. For Saito was not the mere butler he seemed, and his presence in Mr. Curtis' home was fraught with deeper significance than his unsuspecting

employers dreamed. Nay, would ever have thought possible.

But within just a few hours, the whole scheme of things had been changed for all concerned, and but for that little indoor picnic and its outcome, this story would have been quite a different one.

Saito had finished serving the delicious dinner and had withdrawn his mistress' chair, bowing most deferentially as she rose. Then in his queer, broken English he asked:

"And will the Okka-san condescend to inform the humble Saito if his Yoshi-Ko mage liddle some bedder?"

"Thank you, Saito, your Yoshi-Ko is much better. It was not serious. We were unwise to let her sit up so long, that is all. She has slept well and is much refreshed, and will be quite herself by tomorrow."

"That—that—is bedder. How nize. Saito make prayer of thangs to Kwannon. Kwannon one kind go-dees. Make all ride wid Yoshi-Ko if Saito make 'nough profoun' sup-

plication. Saito no can see Yoshi-Ko for liddle bid while whicheven?"

"You wish to see Miss Hope this evening, Saito? Is that what you mean?" asked Mrs. Curtis kindly.

"Yes, mos' gracious Madam. Saito can see?"

"I will ask Miss Forrester if she thinks it wise. I fear she will not approve. She has kept Miss Hope very quiet all the afternoon."

"Saito no make some noise as liddle bid mouse. Just in the door one so small minute, to see, see—the agustness. Then Saito some can close eyes and mage a-sleep ad nide. No see—no mage sleep nex' nides."

"We will try to insure your night's sleep, my good Saito," smiled Mrs. Curtis, as she passed from the room followed by Mr. Curtis. Could she have seen the change which swept over the little Jap's face, she might have wondered whether a vast deal more than the loss of a night's sleep did not depend upon his

“one liddle bid look upon the sun-princess” before he retired.

When Miss Forrester was consulted she demurred. In some way she felt that Saito often disturbed her patient. Not intentionally perhaps,—she gave him the benefit of that doubt,—but by an indescribable atmosphere which he created. She could not put it into words, but she felt it whenever Saito was present.

“But he asks for only ‘one liddle bit look ad,’ ” laughed Mrs. Curtis. “His devotion to the child is, I am forced to admit, just a trifle trying at times, but may he not bid her good-night?”

“If he will not come near her. Just at the door,” was Miss Forrester’s final dictum, and Saito was informed that as Hope was about to go to sleep, it would be unwise for him to do more than bid her good-night at her door.

Silently as a shadow he crept to the door, stepped across the threshold and made the

bow he would have made in a temple. Then, with head still bent, he said very softly:

"Iro, iro arigato. Shio-giyo mu-joyo, oh, Ko-no-hana-saku-ja hime. Saito adores, Saito the understanding has. Sleep well. Sayonara, Sayonara."

To Hope, Mrs. Curtis and Miss Forrester, but a small portion of Saito's good-night speech was intelligible. They understood that "Arigato" meant "thank you," and "Sayonara" in simple English translation meant "Farewell" or "Good-by" or even "good-night," but they had not the faintest comprehension of the deep significance of the words the little man had spoken, or the awe which filled his soul as he made his devotions to one whom he firmly believed to be a supernatural being.

His words as near as English can convey their meaning were:

"Many thanks. Many thanks, oh, most Gracious One, radiant blooming as the flowers! The outward manner or seeming is not

always a true index to the inner being. Saito can see deeper than these about you. He understands and consequently adores. Peace be between us if we must part. My adoration extends beyond this life."

Then, as silently as he had entered, Saito slipped away, and an hour later was in a distant part of the city in close consultation with an official of his own country.

CHAPTER V

THE KENTUCKY CARDINAL'S MESSAGE

Easter morning. Spring's beauty, peace and calm over all. It was eleven o'clock, but Hope as the result of the previous day's excitement, was too weary and weak to do more than lie quietly upon her cot in the sunny bay-window and look out upon the world of sunshine and joy beyond it, a vision of light herself; the very personification of the Sun Princess whom Saito firmly believed her to be as she laid there bathed in the sun's radiance, for the curtains were drawn back and the big window was flooded with its rays.

At this hour the street was strangely quiet, nearly everyone having gone to services in the city's countless churches. Now and again a caterer's wagon clattered by, but for the

most part a Sabbath calm had settled upon that section of New York.

How softly green were the maples and horse-chestnuts which edged the sidewalks and bowed and swayed before Hope's window as though waving to the little girl who had once skipped and laughed so happily beneath their shade. How fresh and sweet were the tiny patches of lawn in which they grew, mowed the previous afternoon, and as the result of a shower during the night, sending up to Hope's windows a delicious, refreshing fragrance.

In the house scarcely a sound was to be heard. Mr. and Mrs. Curtis had gone over to St. Stephen's, where the boy choir was to sing one of Hope's favorite hymns. Miss Forrester was in the bedroom setting it in order, for Hope had passed a restless night, and Miss Forrester had moved her into her beloved window but a half hour before, even then questioning the wisdom of the little excitement which might result from it. But

Hope seemed so happy in her sunshine that the nurse's fears were soon allayed, and she went about certain duties which she never intrusted to anyone else.

Presently these called her to the room at the extreme end of the suite,—the room whose walls had witnessed such torturing suffering, such oblivion to the world of things, and then such relief. Truly a room of bitter-sweet memories.

Miss Woodward, the assistant nurse, was absent for the day. Lizette had gone to High Mass, where the good soul was praying most devoutly for the recovery of the child she so loved. Even Saito had gone out into the little garden below Hope's western window to gather a cluster of marguerites, fresh washed by the night's shower, for his Yoshi-Ko. Once there, he fell into a strange reverie in which the religion and gods of his own land were oddly confused with the God worshipped in the land in which he now dwelt. The God whose incarnation was even now being celebrated in the

temples of these incomprehensible people. Poor Saito! He could not understand that he was equally incomprehensible to those he served.

Presently the rich strains of St. Stephen's organ rolled out upon the still air, followed by the exquisite voice of the boy soprano, as he sang Hope's hymn:

“Months in due succession, days of
lengthening light,
Hours and passing moments praise
Thee in their flight;
Brightness of the morning, sky and
fields and sea,
Vanquisher of darkness, bring their
praise to Thee!
Welcome, happy morning! Age to
age shall say!” Etc.

Saito listened, now and again catching a word. He could not understand the significance of the hymn, or the strange ceremonies. Who was this Christ whom the Christians said had died for their salvation and now lived again? Who had once been a little child and

grown to manhood, with only kindness in his heart for every living thing, human or animal. Of whom his Yoshi-Ko had that wonderful Kakimono (picture) hanging near her bed? Had he not seen it one morning when he had asked permission to carry up to her bedroom the gohan (breakfast) which, he, Saito had arranged with his own hands? A service he would not have deigned to perform for any other human being. There were servants galore in the augustly rich Curtis Sama's house. It was their business to carry trays, not his. He was,—well he was not a menial though for reasons of his own he chose to appear in that character for the time being.

Yes, he had then seen that wonderful painting, so unlike the paintings of his own land, and had lingered a moment to look at it, and Hope's gaze had followed his as, with a smile which he still vividly recalled, she asked:

“Do you know who it is, Saito-san?”

He had answered: “No, most honorable one. Perhaps Yoshi-Ko's all same friend?”

"Yes, Saito. The dearest friend I have. The one who is going to make me well before long. Yes, some day soon. Then, Saito, I shall walk like you."

"Ah, the great doctor-san? He mage, mage —Saito no can talk the word—op-eration? Yes?"

"Yes, he is a great doctor, but not like Dr. Hartmann. A much wiser, greater doctor."

"Lige Dr. ——?"

Saito named the great surgeon who had come several times with Dr. Hartmann.

"Far greater than even Dr. ——, Saito. I have never seen him, but I shall some day. He is coming to make me well. I shall know when, because he will send a messenger; of that I am sure."

"Telephony?" queried Saito. "Live far, far off. Odder side big water mebbe? Yes?"

"Far away and yet so near," said Hope, a wonderful light filling her eyes, as she looked toward the blue skies and, raising her hand, pointed upward.

"Ah-h-h!" The word was a mere breath. Saito had grasped her meaning. He bowed and said: "The honorable Lord Shaka-ni-yorai? He come? Yes, he mage Yoshi-Ko to run all same lige, lige liddle deer? Yoshi-Ko know how he come?"

"How? No, Saito, I do not know, but he will come. Of that I am sure. It will not be very long now, I think."

"Saito watch. Saito know. Yes, Saito mage offering to the great Lord Shaka to mage the hurry come. Many year long time sinze Yoshi-Ko runnin'. Her honorable feet achin' for run. Yes, Saito look with many eyes and see first."

Then, lest he mistake the identity of the Christian's Shaka (Christ), he went close to the picture to gaze long and steadily upon it, his lips compressed and his head nodding slowly.

The painting was a copy of West's "Christ healing the sick," and the tender pity in the

divine face made it one of Hope's greatest treasures.

As Saito stood in the beautiful little garden, its ivy-covered wall secluding it from the curious gaze of passers-by, his thoughts harked back to that day during the previous autumn. Would the Great Lord Shaka come to cure his beloved little mistress as she believed? And if so, in what form? Would he send a messenger as she had declared he would, and what form would that messenger assume? Shaka was all-powerful. Everything was possible to him. And was there, after all, anything in common between his, Saito's, gods and the one whom the Christians worshipped?

The moments slipped by, and still Saito stood lost in his meditations. They were interrupted by the arrival of Michael upon the scene. Michael, like a good Catholic, had been to early Mass and was still imbued with the spirit of the beautiful, impressive service. He came quietly out into the lovely little garden and drew near Saito without speaking.

The East and West stood side by side, yet divided by the ages.

"Well, Saito, me lad, and what's makin' ye look that solemn, this mar-r-vel av a day? 'Tis too foin a wan for a long face, and a gr-r-eat day it is, entoirley. Ye've none like it out beyant, Oim doubtin'," he concluded, with a nod toward that part of the world in which he believed Japan to lie.

Michael was a hard proposition for Saito, in every sense of the word. The educated European was difficult enough to comprehend, but the common people were beyond him. He knew Michael belonged to the peasant class, but Michael's rich brogue, odd phraseology and unvarying good humor,—in short, his inclination to accept the little Jap as a perpetual joke, baffled Saito mightily, for nothing so outrages a native of Japan as ridicule, and Saito was never quite sure whether the big, husky, Irishman was ridiculing him or not.

But, at all events he was not doing so at

the present moment, for the smile upon Michael's face was full of friendliness and—well—one must be courteous even to one's inferiors, forgiving any lapse upon their part, because the gods had made them of a lower caste.

“Yes, fine day. Much mage glad joy. Great feast ad all temple of your honorable Lord Shaka.”

“Our Lor-r-d Sha-ka?” repeated Michael doubtfully. “And who might his high mightiness be, I dunno?”

“Alle samee Kirishitan God-Young-man. Yoshi-Ko have got hang by futon (couch).”

“Are ye talking av the holy Jesus, ye little man?” There was dismay, incredulity and almost horror in Michael's voice.

“Yes. Him comin' in liddle while which-even, mage Yoshi-Ko alle same odder liddle chil'ern. Walk lige somebody. She tell Sai-to. Yes, sure come.”

“An' do ye mane to tell me that the choild

up yonder towld ye that? That the holy Jesus was comin' to cure her?"

"Sure same. You thinkin' she jus' liddle bid yo'ng girl. Saito know she all time Hinohime. You seein'. You knowin', some day. Saito mage big prayer Kwannon. Sure get."

"Kwannon? Kwannon? An' who's he?"

"No he. Him her, lige you say. Gread, big, honorable goddess. Mage sorry for all people who burn incense ad shrine."

"Do ye mane the Holy Virgin? Have ye a Holy Virgin in your hyathen churches?" asked Michael, his honest face full of bewilderment, for what was this he was hearing?"

Here was a creature whom he had regarded as only half a human being. An outcast from heaven and hardly worthy a place upon the earth unless simply to serve superior beings. Poor Michael! his view-point was no narrower than the view-point of many of far more enlightened mind. What could it mean? And how little he guessed Saito's estimation of him-

self: A mere barbarian belonging to the Heimin (very common people) yet kindly, and with a strange religion. Nevertheless, they had a common bond: Their love for the child lying in the sunny bay-window up-stairs.

"Kwannon gread goddesse," repeated Saito.

"Ye're dead right, me b'y. She is that, an' I'm thinkin' ye're not far wrong whan ye're sayin' she's goin' ter whork miracles wid that blessed angel of sufferin' up there," ended Michael, nodding toward Hope's west window. "'Twould be no whonder if a miracle tuck place ferninst our very oyes wid that child, the saints rest her, she's that patient and—and—" Michael's vocabulary failed him.

Saito completed his sentence with:

"She no can help. *She Hinohime*. Must mage sweetness lige sunshine. Saito now go mage offering of flowers. Flowers mos' sweet-es' thing in all worl' nex' Hinohime. Ah-bah'" (good-by), and with a deep bow Saito went softly away with his cluster of marguerites.

Michael watched him as he disappeared

within the house. Then, raising his hand he absently rubbed his curly brown head and murmured:

“Well, there’s no use av tryin’ fer ter r’ason out some things. Thot little man has got his Holy Virgin and his Holy Savior, and Oive got mine. Now are they wan and the same, wid different names, or are they not? ’Tis not Michael O’Brien who’ll be afther answerin’ thot question, but may it plaze the Lord God Almighty and his blessed saints to send that same miracle av a cure to this house, for if iver wan deserved it ’tis this same,” and devoutly crossing himself after his prayer, Michael went about his duties within doors.

Meanwhile, up in her sun-bathed window, Hope had lapsed into a half-sleeping, half-waking state when the world of objects about her seemed at once real and unreal. The voices of occasional pedestrians in the street below her sounded vague and far off. All sounds were strangely hushed. Worn and weary from a miserably restless night, sleep having come

only after the administration of a sedative for overtaxed nerves, she dozed, half-roused, then dozed again, falling at length into a light sleep. Miss Forrester peeped in, sighed with relief to see the eyelids closed at last, and slipped down to the library to get a book for which her little patient had asked.

Then a most unusual thing happened. Out in the warm sunshine of the quiet city street there appeared a flash of most gorgeous crimson. More than crimson, the brilliant red of the brightest flame. Thither and yonder it flashed, now up, now down, then into the thick, green foliage of the horse-chestnut trees upon one side of the boulevard, only to dart away to make a wonderful patch of glowing color against the maples. At length it settled upon a bough of the maple tree which almost reached Hope's bay-window, and clear, sweet and liquid as those of a flute, came the marvelous notes of a Kentucky cardinal bird. An ecstasy of spring, of the joy of new life, of freedom! What a picture the brilliant bird

in the gorgeous plumage of the mating season made against the green foliage which formed his background! How clear above all other sounds his estatic love song.

Hope stirred slightly but did not open her eyes. The note was repeated with greater insistence, as though the exquisite bird wished to call her attention to himself and his rare accomplishment.

At that moment Saito came to the open door, a smile upon his usually impassive face, his slant eyes filled with eager anticipation of the look of pleasure which he knew from former experiences would illumine the Hinohime's face when he presented his offering. Such a smile was a good omen. Saito liked to bring it to Hope's lips.

And now, as he stood upon her threshold and saw her lying there upon her couch asleep, and the wonderful bird thrilling his liquid notes almost at her window's ledge, he stood as though spellbound.

Then softly, hardly above a whisper, but

with vibrant sweetness, the sleeper's lips formed the words:

"Yes. Yes. Before another Easter day. I hear. I understand. To walk again."

Then again came that clear, sweet whistle, as the bird drew nearer and nearer. Saito could not have stirred if he would. He felt rooted to the spot. What was this he was witnessing?

"Yes, I shall come," continued the soft voice, as though in reply to a question, though the eyes remained closed.

Then there came a quick flutter of wings and the bird alighting upon the very window-ledge, burst into a ravishing ecstasy of song, fluttered its wings and was gone.

And that instant Hope roused, drew a long breath, and turned her head toward Saito, saying:

"Ah, Saito, I've had such a wonderful dream. I hope it may come true. I did not know you were there. And you have brought

me some marguerites. How kind of you. Thank you so much."

Half drowsily she stretched forth her hand for them.

Saito glided to the couch and laid his offering upon it, dropped to his knees, touched his forehead to the floor, and then silently as a shadow arose and slipped from the room.

Holding the flowers in her hand Hope again fell asleep.

CHAPTER VI

HOPE'S WELCOME TO SANS SOUCI

April, with its smiles and frowns had slipped away. May's blossoms had filled the parks with their fragrance, and now June was drawing to its close. And such a June! Warm, it is true, but still so fresh, green and beautiful.

It was exactly two months since that Easter morning when Hope's rare visitor came to her window, the visitor of whose presence none but Saito knew. For days afterward the little man was strangely silent, going about his duties as one in a dream. Not a word did he breathe to any one of that morning's experience, but no earthly power could persuade him that the beautiful cardinal had not been the great god Shaka, or the Christian's deity, come in that guise to bring to the Sun Princess the long-desired message; the token and promise of

restored health and strength. Had she not actually talked with him?

Saito had understood every word of that conversation. The gods had graciously permitted him to do so. But what would be the outcome? Would the great god recall the Sun Princess to her own realm, and so deprive Saito of any future glimpse of the light of her presence, or would the invisible, the spiritual being pass on, leaving to those who loved her a visible, material form, in the child who filled all their world with light?

Saito could not even conjecture, nor dared he drop the slightest hint to any one regarding it. Weeks passed before any light was thrown upon the subject for him, and then, as is almost invariably the case, it came when he was least expecting it. He had carried to Hope's room a note from an old gentleman living opposite, a quaint, odd character, who adored the child and often amused himself—and her—by writing long, fanciful stories for her.

Saito held the little silver salver toward her,

and Hope took the letter with a gay little laugh. She was much better and stronger than she had ever been, and each day seemed to bring with it increasing strength, to the inexpressible joy of those who watched and cared for her.

"Yoshi-Ko mage laugh lige—what you call? Robin-San?"

"Do I, Saito? That is because I am happy. I am growing stronger every day. Ah, Saito, my dream is surely coming true. Before long I am going to walk! Think of it!"

"Yes, Saito know. He, that liddle bird whad sing his story ad thad day what Kirishitan callin' E-star, Saito stand ad door and see," said Saito mysteriously.

Hope looked puzzled. That dream had, indeed, been very real. "What do you mean, Saito?" she asked.

Saito drew nearer and whispered: "Saito stand ad door when gread Lord Shaka's—hims—(pointing to the picture above Hope's couch), messangar come ad tree, ad window

and speag to Yoshi-Ko, and Yoshi-Ko mage liddle talk wid gread Lord Shaka. No one else seein', no one else knowin'. Gread god come all samee lige beautiful red bird, mage sing ad Yoshi-Ko. All people thinging just nodding but bird song; Saito and Yoshi-Ko knowing bedder. Yoshi-Ko sure some day running; pretty soon ride way."

Hope looked straight into Saito's eyes, her own shining as she cried:

"Then it was not all a dream last Easter morning? There really was a bird on the window ledge which sang so wonderfully? Did you see him too, Saito? I was so tired, so sleepy that morning, I could not tell whether I was awake or just dreaming. I thought a beautiful red bird was singing—yes—talking to me. Wasn't that odd? And I was talking to him, and I thought he promised that before the next Easter day I should be well, and I said strange things to him."

"Yes, Saito heard. Saito know whad Hino-hime meaning bud-bud—don' don' go bacg

to Great Lord! No leave Saito and Okkas—
san—all, all.” Saito, the impassive, was
strangely moved.

“Go away, Saito? I don’t understand. I
do not wish to go away. I love everybody
here and my home too well to wish to go away.
Of course I shall not go away. I belong right
here.”

Saito shook his head, but smiled as though
comforted by her assurance. If the august-
ness deigned to remain, that was her gracious
will. He accepted the blessing the gods chose
to confer. Then he bowed himself from the
room and Hope thought of her wonderful
dream, which, after all, had not been a dream,
and wished she might again see the glorious
songster which had visited her that Easter
day, from which day had dated her improved
health.

And so the weeks had passed, and now it was
time to think about packing trunks and flitting
to that section of the world where cardinals
make their summer home—Lake George—

where Mr. Curtis owned an extensive island, picturesque as fairyland, upon which he had erected a spacious bungalow for his own use and a charming cottage which each summer he rented to a friend, a near neighbor to his city home. Here, on Sans Souci, as he had named the island, and which the inhabitants thereabouts had promptly corrupted into "Sands Sucky" he led a life of uninterrupted rest and recreation, snatching from the arduous cares and demands of his New York business life two solid months in which "to learn to be a boy again," and become a new man, as he expressed it. And he came as near doing so as lies within the power of any adult human being.

Though enjoying all the comforts and many of the luxuries of their city home, the life led upon Sans Souci was one of absolute freedom for all in Ruheheute, the name given the bungalow.

The flitting from the city was a good deal of an undertaking. At least hitherto it had always been, owing to Hope's absolute help-

lessness and weakness, but this June all looked so much more promising for the little invalid, and her own anticipation of the pending change was so keen, that her joy was infectious.

Of the household, Saito, Miss Forester, Miss Woodward and Lizette went northward as a matter of course, and several of the servants also, but Michael always remained behind to care for the closed city house.

The thirtieth of June, the day set for the journey to the lake, was "one of the heavenly days which cannot die." Overhead the sky was blue as the crystal beryl, and soft little winds played "I spy" with the foliage. The air made one long to draw in deep, deep breaths of its life-renewing freshness.

As no chances were ever taken when Hope's well-being or comfort were in question, the trip to the lake was planned with the utmost care. The great Packard conveyed Hope and Miss Forrester to the Grand Central Station, the other members of the family and house-

hold following in other motor cars. When the station was reached, a private car, in which Hope's cot could be swung to avoid all jarring, received its precious passenger, and there seemed but slight change from the comforts of Ruhevoll. Once at the lake, Mr. Curtis' beautiful steam yacht met them, and on its spacious deck Hope sailed as tranquilly toward her summer home as the *Lady of Chalott* drifted down to Camelot, Miss Forrester alert for any sign of fatigue, and Saito with eyes for his Yoshi-Ko alone.

They reached Sans Souci at six in the evening, the loveliest hour of the twenty-four at the lake, especially during June, for then "the Western waves of ebbing day flood o'er the lake their level ray," the water turns to the richest deepest ultramarine, the Eastern mountains glow in their most brilliant green. In the woods and open glades vesper sparrows trill, the hermit thrush sends his plaintive call reverberating through the deepest woodland haunts, to be answered by the liquid

notes of his cousin, the woodthrush. Robins sing their even'song, and hundreds of other songsters who visit the shores of Lake George during the midsummer months fill the sunset hour with melody.

Hope was tired after her long journey, but less so than upon any previous occasion, and Miss Forrester was overjoyed to note the absence of the languor which had marked the end of each previous trip. Her little patient was chatting happily with her mother as the *Idlewild* was being made fast to the long stone pier, and much interested in the deft, quick manner in which the crew made the landing.

Then came the disembarking, and Hope was borne across the gang-plank, up the dock and along the beautiful hydrangea-bordered path to the bungalow, where her pallet was placed upon the broad piazza by the four sailor lads who had so carefully lifted it from the deck.

Miss Forrester hurried into the house to see that all was ready in Hope's suite, while Miss Woodward went with Lizette to add any nec-

essary touches, and Mrs. Curtis dropped upon a low chair beside the cot to ask softly: "Are you very tired, sweetheart?" as she laid her hand upon the soft, white one resting upon the light steamer rug.

"Oh, Mother, it's perfectly wonderful! I've never, never had such a lovely journey. Why, I believe I could make it all over again and never mind it one bit."

"Well, we will not put it to the test this time, dearie, though it makes me the happiest mother in the land to hear you say so, and to see you so bright. Why, if you continue to do as much up here in this wonderful land as you did while shut up in that big city, I shall take back with me a miracle of restored health."

"I'm going to! Yes, I am. Just you see. Why, when I come here next year, you and I are going to walk right out into those woods yonder, and oh, mother look! Isn't that a cluster of dog-tooth violets growing beneath

that white birch tree? Will you send Lizette to gather some for me, please?"

"I'll send some one you love better than Lizette: I'll send myself," was Mrs. Curtis' cheery answer, for this was one of the happiest days of her life, and she felt almost like a girl again herself as she went swiftly down the pretty little path toward the graceful white birch tree with its carpet of yellow violets. As she was stooping to gather them Saito came out upon the piazza to bring Hope a glass of milk. He was beaming. All was well with his little sun princess. She took the glass with a smile and word of thanks, drank the contents and had just replaced the glass upon the tray when into the rhododendron bush at the end of the piazza darted a flash of brilliant red and the next second high, rich and clear, the cardinal's piping filled the silent evening air. Saito's tray fell to the piazza and the glass was shattered. For the first time since he had served her, Hope saw the little Japanese lose his self possession.

She laughed aloud and cried:

"Why, Saito, are you so easily startled as that? I am less nervous than you are—see," and she held up her hand to show how steady it was.

Poor Saito, his confusion was pathetic. He had, from his standpoint, committed one of the most unpardonable solecisms. He had utterly lost his poise, disgraced himself by a bit of awkwardness worthy of a coolie, destroyed some of his august employer's property, and, in short, proved himself no better than the despicable To-jin (a Chinaman; and when a Japanese uses that term, contempt can go no further). What could he do to make amends? But Hope sought to restore his equanimity by saying:

"Why it was only a bird, Saito. A cardinal bird. See, there he is yonder. Isn't he a beauty? And have you ever heard such a song? Why, Saito, he may be the very one who came to see me on Easter Day. How can we tell? Maybe he knew I had a home

at Lake George and came on ahead to welcome me. I think it was dear of him, don't you?"

While Hope talked on, striving to put the confused Saito at ease, he was hurriedly gathering up the fragments of the glass, now and again casting startled glances over his shoulder at the scarlet visitor carolling his even'song in the rhododendron bush. When every vestige of the accident had been carefully picked up and placed upon the tray by his slender, deft fingers, Saito bent toward Hope and in an awed voice said:

"Thad wonderful omen: Gread good luck. The Lord Shaka mage the Hinohime welcome ad bungalow. Now all things comin' fast lige the horse when runnin'. No mage seeg moach long time some more. Bud Saito ask the forgive for mage smash of glass and bad noise. Saito so sawry, bud he coon' help. Augustness too honorably good nod be angry ad Saito."

"Of course I am not angry, Saito. You

were startled, that is all. But some day we must talk about this great Lord Shaka, whom you believe visits me in the form of a bird. I am afraid I do not understand and I should like to. You will tell me?" queried Hope.

"You wan' mage liddle bit talk wid Saito 'bout gread Lord Shaka? Tha's good. Saito some day tellin' Yoshi-Ko,—bud Saito thing Yoshi-Ko knowin' all time more than Saito knowin'," and the little man hurried away, as Mrs. Curtis came up the steps with her hands filled with yellow violets.

"There, dear, aren't they beautiful? But what ailed Saito? He seemed alarmed when I came."

"Mother, he is so odd sometimes, and has such curious superstitions. He heard the cardinal bird singing in the rhododendron and it startled him so he let fall the glass. Then he was more frightened than ever. Do you know, he thinks the bird is one of his Japanese gods come to make me well. He calls him Lord Shaka. What curious beliefs they have."

"Probably ours seem equally curious to him. His Lord Shaka is almost synonymous with our Christ, and is supposed to assume any form he wishes to in order to achieve his ends. But does he worry you, dear? He is a strange servant. Quite unlike any other we have ever had."

"No, indeed. I'm very fond of him and he seems to love me. But here comes Miss Forrester. Now I dare say you are going to put me straight to bed, you tyrant," and Hope frowned in mock rage.

"Straight!" answered Miss Forrester, laughing.

CHAPTER VII

NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS

The arrival of "the family" (always spoken of in *Italics*) at Sans Souci invariably created a stir. Mr. Packard might arrive earlier than Mr. Curtis, and very often did do so, for Beatrice, their only child, was a pretty lively specimen of her sex and age to keep cooped up in a big city after her school closed on June tenth. So, as a rule, Mr. Packard transported his family to Sans Souci with all possible speed there to occupy the pretty cottage at the opposite end of the island. Mr. Packard was a member of Mr. Curtis' law firm and an old college chum as well. Consequently the friendship between the two families was a very firm one, and they shared in common the privileges of Sans Souci. They had come to the island two weeks before but their coming had not

created the stir in the Colt family (the caretakers of Sans Souci) which the arrival of the Curtis family always created. Mr. and Mrs. Colt and their thirteen children occupied a pretty lodge high up on the hill back of Ruheheute, Mrs. Curtis had christened it "The Beehive." In this seemingly limited abode the little Colts had come into the world, squalled their way through their infantile years, squabbled, romped, played, come to grief and had hairbreadth escapes as they grew up. There was always a new Colt. Mrs. Curtis could hardly recall a single year when there had not been one or two brand new ones, or, certainly, very nearly new ones, and she had grown to accept the fact as a matter of course. Mrs. Colt was a buxom, cheery body whom nothing upon earth disturbed. She accepted each day as it came, went through its unvarying round of duties, and at night settled down upon her squeaking rocking-chair with a sigh of relief and her fist thrust into the inevitable sock or stocking, the pile

awaiting her needle seeming never to lessen, however industriously she dove into it.

Mr. Colt was a long, lanky, loosely-hung-together Yankee, whose words came through his nose with the twang of Ichabod Crane's. He seemed as inert as his wife was energetic, though as a matter of fact he was really a hard worker. Only he slid along through his duties, whereas she tore through hers, and their offspring equally divided their characteristics.

The morning after Mr. Curtis' arrival, there was a lively buzzing in the Beehive. The previous day the strictest injunctions had been laid upon such Colts as could prance to confine their prancings within the limits of the Beehive's outer bounds, a hedge encircling about two acres. Beyond that no Colt was to venture on pain of "the paddling" of his (or her) life. They might look upon the arrival of the royal family from afar, but woe betide the one who ventured nearer, until hailed thither.

"No, ye ain't ne'er one of ye goin' ter go t'arin' down ter that there dock when the *Idlewild* comes in, nor ye ain't ne'er one of ye goin' near Rooy Huppy, neither. My land o'light, wherever did they hit on sich an outlandish name, anyhow? Rooy Huppy? Say, Em'rald, you've spent a hull year at the High up ter Ticonderogy, don't you know what that queer soundin' name stands for?" demanded Mrs. Colt, turning to her eldest daughter, aged sixteen, who was turning off the week's pile of ironing. Emerald had spent one winter at Ticonderoga in order to attend the High School and in consequence was regarded as a shining light of erudition by the other Colts. That her year at the seat of learning had not overtaxed her intellectual faculties was promptly made evident by her reply.

"It's a foreign name, Ma, and you know we didn't have no French up ter High. But onct I ast Lizette what that queer name meant and she said some sort of a shanty. Funny, ain't

it, now, how them city folks likes ter give furrin' names ter places?"

So the day of the big arrival had come and gone without a Colt kicking his or her heels within sight or sound of Ruheheute, but with the dawn of the new day things began to stir in the Beehive. That ironing had meant fresh raiment (perhaps blankets or sheets would be more appropriate), for the entire Colt family, for never had they failed to pay a visit of ceremony upon the arrival of the little lady of Sans Souci. It was always an event looked forward to for weeks beforehand, and talked about long, long after the family's departure in October.

That Hope was so much stronger this year than upon any former one had been speedily reported by "Pa" and "Aries" the eldest son, a boy not quite eighteen, when they came in the night before, for they had been at the dock when the *Idlewild* arrived. Nevertheless, the thirteen Colts could not stir foot in the direc-

tion of Ruheheute until the 'phone summoned them.

It was a glorious morning. Never had the lake been bluer, never had each little wave sparkled and danced more gaily, or the sky seemed so crystal clear.

Hope, who had slept soundly throughout the night, was as blithe as the birds which carrolled in the fairy-like woodland all about her, for while preserving its appearance of wildness, Sans Souci was really a most carefully tended and cultivated bit of land.

At ten o'clock Hope's couch was placed upon the broad piazza in a perfect bower of palms and blooming plants, with Rambler roses festooning the roof above her, and white clematis framing a vista through the white birches straight down to the water's edge.

In a pale blue, Japanese linen, exquisitely embroidered in white wisteria, Saito's offering upon the previous Christmas, her long, bronze gold curls lying in rich masses upon her

snowy cushions, Hope was good to look upon.

Beside her couch was a low wicker table, upon which were piled thirteen parcels of various sizes, each carefully wrapped in white paper, each tied with gold cord and in each knot a little cluster of marguerites. The star and her properties were at hand and she now awaited her audience.

But before they set forth from the Beehive let us drop a word regarding the little Colts.

In the first place, their mother and father lived and were guided by *The Farmer's Almanac*. Mrs. Colt was deeply impressed by its occult teachings; her husband by its precepts regarding planting and harvesting and its items of general information. Its illustrations, the big words which fairly peppered it, and its generally thrilling mysteries appealed to Mrs. Colt, and she devoured its contents from cover to cover, alack! little the wiser when she had finished its perusal than when she began save for a very hodgepodge of high

sounding words and names which pleased her mightily without meaning a thing. The signs of the Zodiac were a joy to her soul; the names of the gems which were supposed to be the lucky stones for each special month thrilled her to the very center of her being. To bring those names into everyday life was the aim of her ambition, and that aim was achieved by bestowing them upon her luckless children. Consequently, a most astonishing array had grown upon the leaf of the family Bible which recorded births. They totaled thirteen and ran thus, beginning with the eldest son of the house, who had happened to arrive upon this earthly scene in March and in consequence had to journey through life and be recorded after his demise as Aries. There appeared to be no special significance to the name further than that connected with the Zodiacal sign, for long, lank Aries, so like his father, upon a smaller scale, was quite wanting in ram-like aggression. The name of Moses might have come closer to the mark.

Then a little over a year later a daughter had arrived upon a June day and Emerald became her cognomen. The following July brought Ruby and this name came nearer being appropriate than any of the others, for Ruby certainly possessed a remarkably red crown.

Nearly two years passed after the Ruby was added to the collection of jewels and then May brought two sons to the Colt household. They elected to arrive on the same day so the Almanac had to do double duty, and Castor and Pollux joined the Zodiacal signs. Before Castor and Pollux could navigate unaided, Sapphire swelled the collection with her presence. Then two sons came within the next three years, who became Leo and Tarus. In time a certain November day brought a son and daughter, who shone upon the list as Topaz and Sagittarius. Chrysolite arrived one September morning, Carmelian one August day, and during a pouring rainstorm in the January of the winter just passed Aquarius opened his blue eyes upon this earthly scene, making

thirteen as flourishing, husky youngsters as could be found in the Northern woods, and people began to wonder if the lucky, or unlucky thirteen would prove the last. Thus far, poor little Aquarius seemed destined to demonstrate the unlucky superstition, for he had already experienced three or four hair-breadth escapes. His first mishap at the tender age of two months, had nearly proved his last, for he had slipped from his mother's arms splash! into the lake, as she was carrying him across the bridge which connected the island with the mainland, and had it not been a plunge into what might be regarded as his native element, poor Aquarius' story might have ended before it was well begun.

But to the family's pending visit to Ruhe-heute.

This July first was almost as important a day as July Fourth inasmuch as it was certainly a high-day and holiday for the Colts, lacking only fireworks to make it the Fourth's equal.

Mrs. Colt was busy with the three youngest of her tribe: Emerald was laying down the law to those next in line; those still older were looking to their own adornment, even Aries having a day off to attend the levee. As the last scrubbee was scrubbed to the shining stage, the last member of the house of Colt made immaculate as to smoothly brushed hair, buttons in holes, and shoestrings tied, the 'phone jingled its summons and a stampede seemed imminent,—a stampede promptly arrested by Ma Colt's peremptory words.

"Now, see here, quit it! You, Topaz and Saggy, just take holt o' Sappy's and Ruby's hands. And Castor and Pollux, if you let Chryssy and 'Nellie git so much as one step ahead o' you, there'll be something a-stirrin' when ye git back ter home, an' don't ye fergit it, neither. Now, Em'rald, you wheel Aquarius in his go-cart what Mis' Curtis sent him fer his bornin' present, an' you, Aries, jist keep yer eyes battled to'ards the hull kit and boodle of them kids, cause Em'rald's gotter

make Aquarius make the show-up of his life an' can't be thinkin' of nothin' else; for if she does he's goin' ter holler bloody-murder, like's not an' disgrace himself forever 'n a day. Course he can't be expected ter know he's doin' it, but it's up to you older ones ter keep some show o' dignity in the fam'ly. Now go 'long an' behave yerselves, and you, Topaz, and Saggy, just fer onct try ter keep on earth. My land o' light, I kin most times count on 'tothers, but you two is the limit. I got a mind ter give Sapphy a good sharp pin an' let her give ye both a stick with it, if ye take ter cavortin'. Now go 'long quick," and the order being issued they went, Aries leading the van, and Emerald bringing up the rear, trundling the resplendant Aquarius, starched to within an inch of his young life, and be-bowed until he resembled the pink peonies nodding at either side of his triumphal progress. From her resting place upon the piazza, Hope could look up the beautiful path and see the procession wending its way toward her.

"O, Mother, did you ever see anything so funny as they are? Do say something solemn to keep me from laughing when that long, lanky Aries makes his bow and Emerald makes her speech. I wonder how long it takes her to learn a new one for each occasion, and what the latest will be like? I've asked Miss Woodward to keep a sharp eye upon Topaz and Sagittarius during its delivery, and I'm going to keep my eyes tight upon this cluster of flowers, or I'll disgrace myself as sure as can be."

As the procession drew near, broad grins were discernible upon the faces of the younger members of the tribe of Colt, but Aries, Emerald, Ruby and Sapphire were too heavily burdened with their sense of responsibility to smile.

As they entered the main walk leading up to the piazza, Hope waved her hand gaily and cried:

"Oh, come as fast as you can, please; I am so anxious to see Aquarius," whereupon the

procession broke into double time, small, fat Aquarius wobbling about in his go-cart as though he were almost as unstable as the element for which he was named.

On reaching the piazza all paused for Aries to precede them up the two steps and make the customary opening salutation, Emerald and the others standing at attention (as they understood it), and waiting with bated breaths.

Aries went to the foot of the couch, stopped short, brought his heels together and bowed from the hips. He was exactly like a jack-knife being opened and closed, but no one guessed how he had covertly watched Raymond Curtis, Jr., and practiced for hours in the garage to imitate his walk, his carriage, his bow; for Raymond Curtis was poor Aries' model in manners correct, and during each September Leave which Raymond, in common with all midshipmen at Annapolis, enjoyed, Aries studied his model at every possible range. Hence the bow which he fondly

believed to be a very replica of Raymond's, and his:

"Very glad indeed to see yer back ter Sands Sooky, Miss Hope."

"I am so happy to be here, Aries," answered Hope, offering her dainty hand.

Aries reached forward to clasp it in his big brown one when, from sheer force of habit, he drew it back, and though it had barely twenty minutes before been submitted to a cleansing with "Dutch Cleaner," drew the palm across the seat of his trousers at which juncture Castor blurted out:

"Oh, yer boob, ye've washed yer hands!"

There is no telling how embarrassing a moment might have ensued had not Hope reached a little further toward him and said:

"Doesn't my hand look bigger and stronger than it did last June when I came to Sans Souci?"

The tiny hand instantly vanished from sight in Aries' paw, as he stammered:

"Why—why—the hull of ye looks bigger

'n stronger somehow; an' it's a sight fer sore eyes, sure."

Hope laughed happily and said:

"Now, Emerald, please come up to see me and bring Baby Aquarius."

But the moment for presenting "Baby Aquarius" had not yet arrived. First must come the speech of welcome.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESCUE

Thrusting the handle of the go-cart into Sapphire's hand, probably because she happened to be the one nearest at the moment, though saner thought would have dictated almost any other guardian for Aquarius, Emerald stumbled up the steps, the stumble only increasing her confusion, and coming close to Hope, made the courtsey taught at Ticonderogy's High. It was a cross between a duck and the squat of our "squat-tag" days, and came near proving Hope's undoing, but she rallied her powers to ask:

"Are you quite well, Emerald, and have you one of your lovely speeches to make for me? I am very flattered to have you take so much trouble on my account."

"Yes, Miss Hope. I learnt a verse this

time, 'cause you said last year you loved po'try. Shall I say it?"

"Please do; I'm wild to hear it."

Emerald struck the attitude taught at High, drew in a long breath and—held it. Not a sound escaped the lips for a moment, then:

"C-c-come in the evenin' or c-c-come
in the mornin',

C-come when yer lo-lo-looked fer, er
come without warnin'

K-k-ki-ki-kisses an' welcome yer'll find
here before you,

An' the oftener yer c-c-come here the
more we'll adore yer!"

No pen can possibly convey the degree of effort which was required to launch this effusion, and poor Emerald was perspiring from every pore, and painfully intertwining her fingers long before the end was reached, but the applause which greeted the concluding word proved the finishing stroke. To the confused girl it seemed to come

from every direction, and, in fact, did, for Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, who had been concealed in the big living-room, Miss Forrester, who stood near Hope, Miss Woodward and Saito, who were in the dining-room arranging the refreshments which were never omitted, clapped vigorously, all the Colt's following suit.

But, alas! Sapphire, the guardian of Aquarius, should have had other occupation for her hands, but Sapphire was never over-reliable. During the recital, the children had drawn nearer and nearer to the piazza, "Sapphy" among them, leaving the go-cart and its occupant unguarded.

Now it so chanced that the smooth concrete walk upon which the go-cart stood was on an incline, and that incline led straight to the concrete dock at the foot of the hill. As the verse progressed, Aquarius grew restless; usually he was the center of attraction. He jounced and wriggled. The go-cart stirred, perhaps we

might say "it started, moved and seemed to feel the thrill of life along its keel."

At all events, it surely "got under way," and all unnoticed, gained rapid headway, speeding merrily upon its way toward the lake, its youthful voyager hilariously gurgling and chuckling as its speed increased.

Emerald had uttered her last word, contorted herself into the concluding curtsey, when Sapphire absently reached back her hand for the go-cart handle, only to grasp empty air.

The next second there was a shriek chorused by yells which waked the echoes upon the further shores of the lake, and the stampede which ensued could hardly have rivalled one resulting from a foray of Indians in the days when the beautiful lake had been the scene of terrible conflict. Emerald tore down the steps, nor paused upon the order of her going. Aries' long legs reminded one of the "Three-Legged-Arms" of the Manxmen, for he seemed to be the possessor of three legs rather than

two, so rapidly did they strike the ground and again fly upward. But it would have required even more than the three legs of the Manxmen to overtake the run-away go-cart.

On tore the tribe of Colt, with Aries well in the lead, and on tore Aquarius, headed straight for the element of which he was the godling, joining his howls to the shrieks behind him, for their terror had been imparted to him, and the poor baby began to grasp something of the plunge ahead of him.

The crisis came just as Aries' foot touched the upper end of the pier. A yell, a splash, a shower of spray, and Aquarius vanished from sight, his exit from the scene accompanied by the frantic shrieks and screams of his kindred.

As the startling truth of what had happened came to Hope, she cried aloud:

"Oh, Daddy! Daddy! Quick! Quick!" and never was cry more promptly responded to. Mr. Curtis was upon the piazza at a bound, and a glance showed him the truth. He joined the pursuers.

But that cry of fear had brought still another to her side, one who would have felt his life gloriously sacrificed in her service, were such sacrifice called for.

Saito's sharp black eyes grasped the situation instantly, and he was off like a projectile from a rapid firing gun, casting from him as he ran his white duck jacket, and kicking his small feet free of their low shoes.

Never had Hope or those upon the piazza seen such speed. How little they guessed that back home in Japan, Saito had held the championships for track and wrestling in his University. He swept by Aquarius' pursuers as though they were stationary, reached the pier and in the beating of a pulse was in the lake swimming toward the go-cart, which luckily, being made of wood and rattan, floated, though it had promptly turned bottom-side-up, thus instantly submerging its strap-bound occupant. It would not have required many seconds to put an end to "The Water Bearer's" career. "Water Bearer?" Alack!

that his name's origin should so nearly prove his undoing.

Saito grasped the cart, gave a dexterous twist, and brought the poor half-suffocated baby up to the surface. A few powerful strokes and he had his awkward burden up to the pier, where Aries and Emerald reached forth to bring both cart and baby to terra firma, Saito scrambling out amidst a volley of words, presumably thanks, though everyone talked at once, and Saito himself added to the babel with valuable Japanese.

Emerald hastily unstrapped the gasping child and would have undoubtedly put the finishing stroke to his career, had not Miss Forrester arrived upon the scene, and promptly flopping him over, proceeded to compel the disgorgement of a larger quantity of water than the small man had ever swallowed in the whole course of his brief existence.

Once this was accomplished and Aquarius out of danger, she hurried the dripping child up to the bungalow, where she vanished within

doors, the weeping Emerald close upon her heels, and Hope's voice calling:

"Oh, Miss Forrester, will he be ill?"

"Not for a moment, dear; Saito did the trick to perfection. I'll be back before you can say Jack Robinson."

Just then Saito was seen hurrying around to the rear of the bungalow accompanied by Mr. Curtis, the latter calling out to Hope:

"No harm done at all. Just a grand ducking all around. Don't worry, darling," as he went with the little man.

Saito protested that: "Curtis-Sama no mage come wid Saito. Not ride. Saito all same fish. Water ride place when day hot. Now go mage dry. No fit coming near augustly honorable domicile. No led Okka-san loog! My crashes! Okka-san nod loog on Saito while wed lige rag! Loog lige soach silliest man."

But in spite of his protests, Mr. Curtis saw that Saito had every attention from the other

servants, and then went back to the piazza to calm Hope's alarm.

Hope, Mrs. Curtis and Miss Woodward had their hands full, however, for the Colts had not yet recovered from their terror, and Sapphire, the cause of the disaster, was on the verge of hysterics between her remorse at the consequences of her heedlessness and her fears of what awaited her in the Beehive. So her hostesses had their hands full.

At last Hope had an inspiration: The pile of parcels upon the wicker table! Of course!

Each year, upon coming to Sans Souci, Hope brought gifts for the Colts. If a new Colt had arrived, it must be a gift which suited his or her date of advent. Consequently each Colt boasted a birth-stone given by the "Little Daisy Maiden."

Of course, Aries, Emerald and several of the others had been upon the scene as long as Hope could remember, but the last five had arrived within her recollection and she had, with her own hands, selected the appropriate

gifts for them, Mrs. Curtis having seen to the earlier arrivals as he or she had come. Nevertheless, each year a gift of some sort was chosen for this day upon which Hope held court, and the gifts now lay piled beside her, their presentation having been delayed by the recent catastrophe. So she got busy at once, and in a few moments the wails, sobs or howls subsided, as each child received some pretty little token of Hope's personal thought, each face breaking into broad, ecstatic grins.

Aries became the proud possessor of a silver watch. Emerald nearly wept for joy when she lifted from its bed of cotton a pretty four-leaf-clover pin. Ruby had a gorgeous, blue Dresden sash. Castor and Pollux being twins, must share alike, and two collapsible fishing-rods brought them to the verge of enthusiastic yells. Sapphire had a little silver bracelet. For Leo, who loved to browse round the woods, there was a wonderful book about birds. Tarus, who lived up to his name, was sent into the seventh heaven when he opened his pack-

age to find a full outfit of baseball togs. Topaz and Sagittatus, also twins, each had pretty duck sailor suits, thus solving the problems for twins of opposite sexes. Chrysolite found a lovely doll in her long box, and Carnelian, the almost baby, a woolly dog. Now but one parcel remained, that intended for Aquarius, and just then Miss Forrester brought the crowing baby, absolutely none the worse for his impromptu bath, out upon the piazza. He was rolled in one of Hope's kimonos against the moment when his own garments, by Lizette's skilful fingers, should be dried and ironed to receive him.

"Oh, please bring him here! Please do. Isn't he round and rosy as a pippin'." Cried Hope, and Miss Forrester sat down beside the couch.

Now as everyone knows, the garnet is the lucky stone for January, the month over which Aquarius rules. Consequently, this godson of the great Water Bearer must have a garnet in some form. All his brothers and sisters

had their birth-stones and Mrs. Curtis often wondered what would be her resort if Colts continued to arrive with such amazing regularity until both gems and names gave out. But so far, the day was saved, and Emerald and the others had their raptures over a set of baby pins and studs, each boasting its tiny garnet.

After this excitement had subsided came the refreshments, but before they had disappeared Miss Forrester issued her order: "Enough excitement for one day!" and Hope was rolled into her own room to rest for an hour before her luncheon, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis remaining upon the piazza to start their visitors upon their homeward way. Lizette meanwhile, had ironed, aired and restored to Aquarius his own garments.

The procession was just starting homeward, Aquarius now borne in Emerald's arms instead of returning as he had come, for the go-cart for the time being was entirely out of commission, when Sapphire dropped out of ranks and

fell back to linger at the end of the bungalow.

"Come on, Sapphy," called Emerald, but still Sapphy hung fire.

"Don't you hear me," repeated Emerald sharply. "What yer hangin' behind fer? Ma'll have it in fer yer if yer don't come 'long with the rest of us."

"She will anyhow," was Sapphy's indisputable retort. "She'll paddle me fer sure, an' I didn't mean ter drown Aquie. I don't want ter go back," and a long wail testified to Sapphire's aversion to ending her holiday with the "paddling" promised by her mother to the child who should bring discredit upon the house of Colt that day.

"Well, maybe yer didn't mean ter, but not meanin' ter didn't keep Aquie from gittin' most drowned, and yer might jist as well make up yer mind ter take what's comin' ter yer an' git it over with. If yer'd minded me yer wouldn't be in fer a larrapin' now," was Emerald's unsympathetic retort, as she yanked the dead weight of the corpulent

Aquarius a hitch higher upon her shoulder. Lugging the heavy baby up the steep hill was no light burden, for having been full-fed by Lizette, he had promptly fallen sound asleep.

Now it so chanced that Mrs. Curtis, who had strolled to the end of the piazza to watch her departing guests wend their way homeward, was the unsuspected eavesdropper to this little side-show not set down upon the morning's program, and her warm heart was touched at the thought of such an unhappy ending to what had been a most happy morning, in spite of their fright.

"Poor little soul," she murmured, "it will be a shame if she has to be punished as a climax to her mishap. The fright was enough punishment, I think. I shall certainly have to avert a further catastrophe if I can," and slipping out of the side entrance of the bungalow, she followed her retreating guests up to the Beehive, arriving there only a few seconds behind them. Mrs.

Curtis was nothing if not tactful, and had soon explained the mishap, and expressed the hope that Sapphire would be pardoned because every one had been so charmed with Emerald's recital of her poetry that it was hardly surprising that they had completely forgotten everything else.

Oh, thou gentle art of flattery, how potent thy powers. Truly as the old Virginia Mammy phrased it:

"Dar's a heap mo' flies ketched wid 'lasses dan wid vinegar."

Indeed, Mrs. Colt was so flattered and flustered by the visit itself, quite independent of its covert object, that she did not cease smiling the entire afternoon and when Lizette trundled the dried and rehabilitated go-cart up to its rightful owner during the evening, she questioned whether the accident had really been so very serious after all, so little the worse did either cart or baby seem. Nor did her older offspring feel called upon to enlarge upon the matter.

CHAPTER IX

BEATRICE

A month had gone by. The Fourth of July had been celebrated with many fire-crackers for the Colts, but none within close range of Ruheheute, as their report disturbed Hope; the little girl was not strong enough for the traditional Independence Day racket. So the fusillade common to the day was confined to the Colt's boundaries and to the further end of the island, where Beatrice Packard, whom no amount of noise could disturb, held her celebration from daylight till nine-thirty sent her to bed. Fortunately the island was nearly a mile long and the noise was not audible at Ruheheute. So madcap Beatrice had things pretty much her own way for Mrs. Packard's time was too filled with morning Bridge Parties, after-

noon motor excursions and evening hops given at the big hotel on the mainland to leave her very much time to devote to her small daughter's training. There was one rule, however, which the little hoyden never thus far had broken. She had never trespassed upon Ruheheute's territory without an invitation, or asking permission to do so. So her Fourth of July festivities did not disturb Hope, though all the Packards went over to Ruheheute during the evening to see the display of beautiful fireworks which, under Saito's ordering, had been sent from New York and were set off under his supervision. Truly a wonderful exhibition. That Mrs. Packard had been nearly bored to extinction Mrs. Curtis knew full well, but concluded it would be a wholesome discipline for the lady to follow some one's else inclination just once in a blue moon, and nothing could have equalled Beatrice's and Mr. Packard's enjoyment.

So the month had gone, divided between

days of pleasure, rest, happiness and alas! some of anxiety, weariness and pain, for Hope had her off days when all she had gained seemed slipping away again, and the shadows fell upon Ruheheute as they had so often fallen upon the big house in the city. Still in the long run she did gain, and none was more alive to this fact than Miss Forrester, who realized better even than Mrs. Curtis how much two steps forward to one backward meant, which for years seemed to be the order. Hope's relapses were less frequent, she rallied more quickly, and the effects were less lasting. The month of July certainly had much to its credit, and this warm August morning found the Little Daisy Maiden resting comfortably and happily upon her couch, which at her request had been carried out upon the beautiful lawn and placed in a little grove of Japanese maples, whose rich bronze foliage carried out the color scheme of her own gold and bronze tints, though she never suspected that fact. On a low wicker chair close at hand

Mrs. Curtis sat reading aloud from a wonderful book of Japanese fairy tales. Saito's latest offering to his Hinohime. Mrs. Curtis often wondered at his extensive knowledge of the literature of his country and his ability to obtain such fine translations, for this was by no means the first book he had presented to Hope, and each one so beautifully illustrated.

Mrs. Curtis was in the midst of the marvelous adventures of O-fugi-nama (Miss Waves-of-the-wisteria-blossom) when Saito came out upon the lawn. Smiling and bowing he said:

"Saito mage hai-yaku-hai (a hundred bows) to the honorable Okka-san and Yoshi-Ko. Saito bring telephony message which all time coming from Misses Be-a-trees. She comin' mage some liddle bid visit at Yoshi-Ko if Okka-san mage agreeable?"

"Miss Beatrice wishes to come to see Miss Hope this morning?" queried Mrs. Curtis.

"Yes, madam. All same ride away. Saito tellin' 'yes'?"

"Do you feel equal to Beatrice today, darling?" asked Mrs. Curtis tenderly.

"I'd love to see her. She will be sure to come in some odd way, or do something funny to make me laugh; she always does. Please let her come."

"You may say we shall be delighted to see her, Saito."

As Saito disappeared Mrs. Curtis laughingly remarked: "Now we will await developments."

They did not have to wait very long. Within twenty minutes there was a jingling of bells far down the drive-way which led to Ruheheute, and then appeared a most amazing creature. Two creatures? Yes, a very moving menagerie of creatures, the propelling power being the four nimble legs of a little gray mule. She might have popped straight out of some old Spanish town, so gorgeously was she caparisoned. Her head-

stall was bedight with a gay Roman sash which, beginning in a huge bow between her erect ears, was thence festooned along her neck to her withers, where it joined a many colored Byzantine scarf encircling her neck, its broad ends flopping down upon each knee. Over her back and sailing gaily out behind, as in the "days of tourney and of tilt" was a brilliantly striped couch cover, its broad bands of blue, crimson, yellow and green visible half a mile off. So much for her small muleship. Now a word for her fantastic rider.

Beatrice, of course! Beatrice arrayed a la lady who "rode a white horse to Banbury Cross," though at second glance one might suspect complex or compound personalities. But let us begin at the top.

On her dark little gypsy crown was a bright pink sunbonnet. Over her shoulders a rare, pale blue crepe shawl, unconcernedly borrowed from her mother's chiffonier, was pinned, for as usual mamma was not at home,

and the maids had other concerns than guarding their absent mistress's belongings, or controlling Miss Beatrice. They might have found their hands full had they attempted to do so. Her dress was her own little, bright pink linen frock, her legs and feet hanging bare, brown and plump from beneath its kilted skirt. Shoes and stockings had been discarded, but upon each toe was fastened a tinkling bell, and bells of all sizes were hung upon Cassandra's head-stall, at the end of the little mule's tail, and along her bridle, while still more bells adorned her draperies. She was a truly gorgeous animal, running her rider a close race for honors in the costuming prize, should one be forthcoming from any quarter.

Ambling easily up the driveway, with every bell tinkling, she bore her funny, fantastic little rider, who in turn was bearing all her strong little arms could manage. On one she carried a big basket, the lid fastened securely down. On the other squawked and

hissed alternately a great white goose, his long neck stretched out over her shoulder. How in the world the child contrived to keep her seat and hold her burdens at the same time no adult mind should venture to guess. Suffice it to say that from babyhood she had ridden everything and anything rideable upon the place, from her father's big saddle horse to the red heifer out in the pasture. A small mule was a simple proposition, even with a goose and a basket added.

"Here we are! Here we come! Good-morning, Mrs. Curtis! Hello, Hope! Hear my bells? I'm the old lady who rode a white horse to Banbury Cross, only she's a gray mule, but that doesn't matter a bit. Whoa, Cassy!" she ended, and Cassy "whoaed" without more ado. She had been the companion of this small rider too long not to understand her words and obey them, though she promptly elected to respond with a resounding bray, which so terrified the poor goose that she added to the din with a wild

quack and a frantic struggle for liberty, which sent her half tumbling, half flying to the ground, where she calmly settled herself at Mrs. Curtis' feet.

"Why, Beatrice Packard! What in this world are you up to?" cried that lady, nearly convulsed by the spectacle, as was Hope.

"I'm playing fairy-tales and Mother Goose and Alice in Wonderland all at once. Don't you think I'm splendid? Hear my bells, and see my rings, and wouldn't mother be just crazy if she knew?" laughed the incorrigible one, raising first one hand and then the other to display its decorations, which proved to be no more nor less than her mother's valuable rings, taken from her jewel-case without a "by your leave." Each finger was a-glitter, the rings in some cases fitting but in others tied on. There were almost priceless rubies, pearls, diamonds, sapphires and opals upon the child's fingers, for Mrs. Packard had a perfect passion for costly jewels. Mrs. Curtis sprang to her feet, crying:

"Beatrice Packard! You little madcap. Where did you get your mother's beautiful rings? Why child, you petrify me. Oh, I hope you haven't lost any. Give them to me, honey, please!"

"Oh, I can't. It would spoil me," cried the heroine, drawing back. "You see I've got to have rings on my fingers if I have bells on my toes," and the ten toes were stuck stright out before her to testify to the fact that she had strictly adhered to the details.

Now Mrs. Curtis' methods and Mrs. Packard's were quite unlike in dealing with unruly ones. Indeed, Mrs. Curtis had never had to exercise authority, but it is safe to say that she would not have resorted to the same order which Mrs. Packard usually adopted.

Advancing toward her visitor she said, while Hope looked on in suspense:

"Beatrice, honey, we love to have you visit us and we are delighted with this new surprise, only I can't permit it to go on if you are going to take such risks. Those rings

are Mamma's not yours to use, dear, and you should not have taken them; you are sensible enough to know that, without it being necessary for me to tell you so, for you are a very clever little girl, I think. But if those rings were lost, Mamma could very justly blame me, and——”

“Oh, no, she couldn't, Mrs. Curtis. You didn't know a thing about it.”

“Ah, yes, but I do now, and she would be very angry, I am sure. Do you love me, dear?”

“Just heaps and heaps. Better than any grown-up I know,” was the qualified answer.

“Then you would not spoil my morning and make me very unhappy, would you?”

“But I couldn't!”

“Yes, you can, if you keep me anxious every moment, and Hope, also. We would forget all the fun in our anxiety for the safety of the rings.”

The piquant little gypsy face looking down upon her out of its pink sunbonnet grew very

serious. The lines of the pretty cherry-red lips drooped. The low forehead puckered into a frown, then a deep sigh of resignation welled up, and two little brown paws were held out toward Mrs. Curtis as reluctantly came the words:

"Take—'em—off—quick, please." Then with lightning-like change. "And hide'em out of sight before I get mad! I wouldn't do it for any one, not even Mamma, without a regular fight for it, but—but—I'll do it for you, because your voice is as soft and tinkly as my bells and—and—I love you."

Mrs. Curtis took the valuable rings very gently from the extended fingers, and dropped them into a little bag at her belt saying, softly:

"We both thank you, Beatrice. Now let us go on with the game. Can't you be "Mother Goose" as well as "The Lady who rode to Banbury Cross"? I am sure you have the goose at hand."

"Yes, I'm her too. And I'm Alice in

Wonderland. See what I've brought in my basket," and once more full of the spirit of her play, she slipped from her mount, the basket still upon her arm and began to untie the strings which held the lid down.

"Now, Hope, let's play the story. See, I've brought the White Rabbit and the Cheshire Cat. You hold Bunnykin if you want to, and plunging her hand into the basket she brought forth by its ears, a beautiful white rabbit which she plumped down upon the couch beside Hope. Then, making a second dive into her storehouse, she lifted out Tiger, the big cat which for three years had led a life of thrilling experiences with his ten-year-old mistress.

He did not seem in the least the worse for his jouncing transit, but purred away with the resigned expression of one who submits gracefully to the inevitable.

"Now," announced Beatrice, "I'll put Tiger in that big apple-tree and he'll sit there and grin at us. I wish I knew how to make

him and the grin disappear, as they do in the story. How do you suppose that was really done?" It was just as well she did not pause to have her question answered, but rushed on to the next scene.

"Now I'll be Alice playing croquet with the flamingo. Oh, dear, what a pity we can't have a hedgehog. But never mind, we've got Granny Quack. She'll be the flamingo, though she isn't pink. If I'd only thought in time I might have painted her. Frederick has a lot of red and white paint in the boat-house and I could have mixed pink as easily as anything. But aren't there white flamingos, too, Mrs. Curtis?" she ended, catching up Granny Quack and essaying the role of Alice, though poor Granny kept her head cocked and alert instead of down toward the ground as the trained flamingo had so accommodatingly done.

For an hour the games went on in all seriousness, Mrs. Curtis doing her best to keep a sober face lest she spoil the fun, for

Hope was delighted. Then Beatrice asked:

"Now would you like me to be the White Knight? I can, just as well as not. I've played it loads of times on Cassy."

"How do you play that?" asked Hope.

"Why, I just turn my bonnet hind-side-before so it looks like the helmet he wore, then I take a long pole,—I guess there'll be a clothes prop in the back garden, won't there? And then I get on Cassy and ride just as hard as I can at a tree or any old thing,—somehow I never can find anybody who'll play the Black Knight and ride King Coal and let me poke them off with my lance—and then, of course, I tumble right over Cassy's head and land on the ground just like the White Knight did. See? I'll show you how. Never mind the lance now, I'll use it the next time," and before Mrs. Curtis could put in a restraining word, she had scrambled up Cassy's side and was off and away at a mad gallop.

"Oh, Mother, she will surely break her

neck!" cried Hope, while Mrs. Curtis could only stand in breathless suspense. It seemed an hour but in reality it was barely two minutes before Cassandra's mad gallop ended in a sudden halt and Beatrice slid,—slithered would describe it better,—straight over the little mule's head into a heap upon the grass, only to bound up like a rubber ball and run back to her startled audience, Cassandra trotting obediently behind her, for the long-eared beastie had performed in this role many times.

"Didn't I do that fine?" cried the triumphant one. "It never hurt me a bit, and Cassy's simply bully at it. Want me to do it all over again? I'll run and get the clothes prop this time."

"Not today, I think. It is now time for Hope to go indoors for her hour's sleep, so we shall have to wait until another morning, dear," Mrs. Curtis answered quickly, for she felt that Hope had experienced about as many thrills as she could stand.

"I'm awful sorry. I hope I haven't made you tired. Have I?" asked the acrobat, reaching for the rabbit and pouncing him into the basket and then looking for the cat. "Where's Tiger?"

"I think he must have gone home, I saw him trotting over the lawn," replied Hope.

"That's lucky. Now I shan't have to carry him too. Gee willikins! but my arm ached when I got here. Come on, Granny; you've got to be taken back."

How she could scramble upon her steed with the heavy goose clasped in one arm they could not understand, but she did it, and Mrs. Curtis handed her the basket.

"Good-by. I've had a splendid time. I'll come again soon, if you'll let me," and away she trotted.

"Mercy me, what a little hurricane!" exclaimed Mrs. Curtis.

CHAPTER X

WHEN SEPTEMBER CAME

As August drew to its close, a decided flutter began to take place in Ruheheute, for a great event was pending. The son and heir of the house would soon be home on a month's leave from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. Yes, and in all the glory of the newly-fledged first-class man!

For this, Raymond's last year at the Academy, a house-party had been planned, and he was bringing with him to Sans Souci three of his chums, whose homes were too remote from Annapolis to admit of their taking advantage of the brief leave. Two were in Raymond's own class, but the third was a third-classman, or "Youngster" as they are called down at the old Naval School.

They would arrive at Sans Souci the last day of August, and Raymond's return was the greatest event of the year in that household, for the midshipman of the Naval Academy knows nothing of the holidays, enjoyed by the college student, who can go and come almost at will, and whose long summer vacation is accepted as a matter of course.

Hope had not seen her brother since the previous September. Consequently, great preparations were being made for the expected guest, and among other delightful things to arrive was a beautiful motor car which bore Raymond's monogram upon the door of the tonneau.

Hope was, of course, in an ecstasy of joy, for though she saw him but rarely now-a-days, her only brother was her hero, and no one on earth was quite equal to him in her sight.

The twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth dragged by for Hope, but flew for the other members of the household, who were hurrying to have everything in readiness for the

thirtieth. Raymond would disembark from the battleship Massachusetts at Annapolis on the twenty-eighth, and with his friends take the limited express for New York, the next day, thence off and away by the New York Central's fast train for the upper end of the lake, where Mr. Curtis had planned to meet them with the new car and make the run down the beautiful western shore of the lake to the town off which Sans Souci lay like an emerald.

When the morning of the thirtieth dawned, Hope was in a flutter. Which would Raymond like best? The pretty white gown, the blue one, or the pale apple green? Should she have daisies upon her table, or the red roses which Raymond loved? Should Miss Woodward have rose-colored or yellow bows on Scheherazade's and Bistri's collars?

The car could not possibly reach Ruheheute before noon, but Hope was arranging all details by nine o'clock, and Mrs. Curtis was secretly rejoicing over the contrast between

the home-coming this September and the previous one, when Hope had been too weak and languid to do more than lie upon her couch and take an apathetic interest in the preparations.

No friends had been invited to accompany Raymond upon that occasion and after one week spent at the lovely island Raymond and his father had made a trip through Champlain and the Canadian Provinces.

But now! Here was a radiant, if semi-helpless little girl of eleven, her eyes shining with eager anticipation and her face softly flushed with eagerness.

"How, oh, how am I to take a nap when my brain just won't go to sleep, Miss Forrester?" cried Hope, when that gentle guardian came at ten o'clock to say that sleepy time had arrived.

"And if you do not what will happen at high noon, my Little Daisy Maiden? No sleepee—no talkee, as Saito would say."

"I dare say I may as well be resigned, for

you are a terrible autocrat," laughed Hope, as she was wheeled away to her quiet end of the bungalow, for this home had been designed for the comfort and well-being of its beloved inmate, and her special end of it was as quiet and peaceful as a nunnery. All sounds could be shut away from it.

The hour's rest upon which Miss Forrester insisted was passed in a gentle refreshing sleep, thanks to that wise woman's administration of a sedative for restless nerves and when it came time for the little lady of Ruhe-heute to reappear upon the scene, she was ready to meet the demands upon her strength.

It was just striking high noon when the honk-honk! Honk-honk-honk! agreed upon as a signal, sounded at the far end of the bridge. Hope almost sat erect in her eagerness, and the next second the beautiful maroon-colored car sped across the bridge and up the driveway amid wild shouts and the hilarious waving of five straw hats, for

Mr. Curtis was as brimful of holiday spirit as his guests.

“Hard a-starboard! One bell, Chauffeur!” cried Raymond. “Ahoy, little sister! Gee, but it’s great to be home! Excuse me, fellows, but I can’t stand upon ceremony with *that* waiting for me,” and one bound took Raymond over the side of the car, to rush up the steps and drop upon one knee beside Hope’s couch. He gathered her into his arms, for this little invalid sister was very dear to the big, six-foot brother, who had carried off one athletic honor after another, yet could be so gentle with her.

“Oh, Ray! Ray! It’s just too good to believe. I could hardly wait for you to get here and I’ve a thousand things to tell and ask you,” cried Hope, as she clasped her arms about him and nestled her golden head upon his shoulder.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Curtis was welcoming her son’s guests. She had met them before, during some of her rare visits to Annapolis,

and had heard so much of them through Raymond's letters that they did not seem strangers to her, though at first there was more or less restraint upon their part. Your midshipman is an odd mixture of man and happy-go-lucky boy, whatever his age, and he thaws out, or freezes up according to the atmosphere in which he finds himself. These lads, with the exception of the youngster, were very near Raymond's age, which was a little over twenty. The youngster, a cousin of one of the other boys, was only seventeen, a merry young grig, good-natured and sunny as the day was long, and half the time being run to death by the older fellows, to which running he submitted with the grace becoming a Youngster, and as the result of so doing he gained much in the long run.

"Now, Goldilocks, I want you to know the fellows. Mother and Father know them already, but you're a stranger, excepting in name, and that'll never do. Come here Tubby and Toots, and meet this little sister

of mine. And you, too, Kid. Hope, this is Russell Fulton, otherwise known as Tubby. He's the versatile one of the crowd and the bard and musician as well. Toots in everyday life is called Donald Campbell. If you want to snare a bird or two, don't try to throw salt upon their tails; just get Toots to whistle them off the bushes for you. And this spindle-shanked infant is the Kid. You can call him Kid or Dicky. That his real name is Richard Finch doesn't count in the least. And, by-the-way, people, real names aren't going to be in it during this month's fling. Cut'em out, please. All agreeable?" demanded Raymond, beaming upon old and young.

"Bet your life! Will you call us by our nicknames, too, Miss Hope?" asked Toots.

"If I may be Hope, or "Sis," as Ray calls me, smiled Hope, looking up into the blue eyes regarding her with mingled pity and admiration, for Happy-go-lucky Toots was wonderfully sensitive to suffering and the thought

of all this lovely child had borne was now impressed upon him. Hitherto it had been only as Raymond had pictured it; now the real evidence lay before him.

"Little 'Sis,' take us under your wing quick. We're a crazy lot of rough-necks—oh, yes, we are," as Hope wagged her head in smiling deprecation of this assertion. "We look all right on the surface, but just you wait till we cut loose, Mrs. Curtis will turn us off Sans Souci. Our holidays go to our heads because we get so few of them, you know."

"I'll take my chances," Mrs. Curtis called from the big East India chair, where Raymond was now bending over her.

"We can never forget our allegiance to the queen of Sans Souci," was little Dicky's gallant speech, as he bowed over Hope's couch. "If she condescends to be the little sister also, that is our gain and honor."

"Good for you, Kid! Didn't know you had it in you. You're developing in great

shape. Keep on the job and you'll be a winner. But he's all right, even if he is my cousin and only as thick through as a match, little Sister. There! Didn't I get that off well? Smashed the ice to smithereens the first whack. Now we're all sisters and cousins and aunts—you will be mine, won't you, Mrs. Curtis? Just pro tem, anyhow," concluded the irrepressible Tubby.

"I shall be highly honored, I'm sure," and true to his suggestion, Tubby from that moment addressed his hostess as "Aunty C.," the other two promptly adopting the more intimate appellation, for they were warm-hearted, affectionate lads.

Just then luncheon was announced.

"Hi, beat it to your rooms, fellows, and spruce up. We're inches deep in soot, Mumsey. Why didn't you shut off our hot air and send us away sooner? But we'll make Bancroft time. Just keep that soup, or whatever you've got, at the right temperature for ten minutes, Saito, and we'll be

in shape to do it justice," cried Raymond, hurrying his guests off to a wing of the bungalow, Mrs. Curtis calling after him:

"Take your time. We must get Hope settled," for upon this great occasion Hope was to take luncheon with the others, Saito having suggested it and devised a way to slip one end of her couch beneath the table, while the pillows held her almost erect. Save for the pillows, no one would have suspected her helplessness.

That was the merriest meal Hope had ever known, but it was only the first of many which followed, for each day held its special delights, and the month sped away upon the wings of the wind.

With each day Hope seemed to grow stronger, and toward the end of the month, was able to take short trips in Raymond's car, Mrs. Curtis growing gay as a young girl as each succeeding day proved to her that the little daughter, to whom she had devoted more than six years of untiring, unceasing

care was really making marked strides toward recovery. Even Miss Forrester, who dreaded to encourage false hopes, began to prophesy wonderful things within another year if all progressed as at present.

Then one day came a telegram. The surgeon who had attended Hope since that dreadful day more than six years before, was on his way to Montreal in company with a famous French surgeon who was visiting the States and Provinces. Dr.————— had told him of Hope's baffling case and he was so deeply interested that he had asked permission to stop at Mr. Curtis' camp en route to Canada and see Dr.—————'s patient.

Of course, consent was eagerly granted, and the distinguished guests arrived within a few days. Raymond took the boys on a long auto trip that morning and the two famous doctors had the house to themselves.

When the examination was over, the physicians were closeted with Mr. and Mrs. Curtis for some time and the French sur

geon's words carried both hope and dismay to his hearer's hearts. He told them that while Hope might under the present treatment in the course of time recover the power to walk, he believed that it could never be a complete recovery without some crisis. In short, some severe shock, either nervous or physical, would be the only cure for the strangely apathetic state into which she had fallen. Not mentally. The brain was too active. That was half the trouble; it robbed the body. But from his experience, he would call it an arrested development, as though Nature had turned sulky and refused to meet the surgeon's efforts half way. Perhaps such an operation as he had more than once performed upon some of his patients might prove successful in her case, but he doubted it. At all events, he would not advise it at present. If they cared to consult him at the end of six months, very well. He would be in Paris then and a sea voyage might prove very beneficial to the little girl.

And there it ended. Hope might, in the slow course of years walk as other young girls did, or she might never be any better than now.

And her chance of being better could only be hoped for through greater suffering.

However regarded, it was not very encouraging. Still, Hope was now stronger than she had ever been, and that alone was subject for thankfulness.

Then the great doctors went upon their way, and things settled back into their old order, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis resolving not to let a shadow fall upon this holiday if they could possibly help it. That a higher power than theirs was ordering all for the best they were sure, and putting their trust in the Great Healer, sure that in His own good time He would restore to perfect health the one they loved so dearly, they dismissed present anxieties and devoted their time to the pleasure of their guests.

And thus the month drew to its close, and

the rare holidays, always so anticipated and so long talked about after Raymond had returned to Annapolis, drew to an end.

During the last week a special treat was planned for Hope. She was not told of it, lest excitement unfit her for it, but the preparations moved forward apace.

CHAPTER XI

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE

The entertainment which Mr. and Mrs. Curtis had planned for their guests was a trip to a beautiful spot near the foot of the lake where Nature had given way to a fantastic mood, for caves, grottoes and strange rock formations made the spot a fitting haunt for elves and fays. Once, years before, when Raymond was a little lad, Mrs. Curtis had visited the spot with him for a grand holiday picnic, and the boy had told Hope many a thrilling tale of its wonders. She had never been strong enough to go there, but had dwelt upon the pleasure which surely lay in store for her some day. Now everything seemed to promise well for the trip. She had made a number of little journeys with Raymond and the boys in his car without feeling any

fatigue; she had joined in some of their quieter forms of amusement, and sat up later than ever before, all, apparently, without ill effect.

Consequently, the trip to the caves seemed a perfectly sane undertaking, and preparations for the twenty-eighth went forward, for Raymond's holidays would end on the following day, as all midshipmen must report at Annapolis on the last day of September.

But, alas! "the best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft agley," and not infrequently it is a very trivial thing indeed which completely overthrows them.

The day before the great outing, in which some young girls from the hotel on the mainland were to join the Curtis party, Beatrice Packard elected to pay Hope a visit. At least, the visit was ostensibly paid to Hope; in reality it was paid to Raymond, for whom Miss Beatrice, who was somewhat of a worldly young miss in spite of her hoydenism, was deeply interested. Beatrice's

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE 165

upbringing was about as unlike Hope's as it well could be. The greater part of her time was spent at the big hotel where she was thrown with children of all ages and all types, and long before she was five she had selected her sweetheart, had her lover's quarrels, jealousies and what not? At nine, she was quite a sophisticated small woman and laying plans, scheming schemes, and devising ways and means to compass her ends, which it would have puzzled Hope's innocent, pure little heart to comprehend. It would also have caused Raymond no little amazement to have read the small maid's mind. To him she was "the crazy kid," and always had been. He rather dreaded her approach near Hope. She was far too uncertain a quantity.

But latterly Miss Beatrice had been inhibiting some very grown-up ideas from her friends at the hotel, and had fully made up her mind that Raymond was to be her "sweetheart." If big, jolly, level-headed Raymond had suspected the child's sentimental fancies

he would probably have shaken her soundly and sent her home.

But he did not, so that contradictory small being went her "ain gait" and Raymond made but one stipulation after the first visit which she had paid to Ruheheute soon after his arrival.

"Let's have her in small doses, Mumsey. She's got enough energy for ten kids of her size, but I don't want it poured all over me, and I should think she'd drive Hope crazy."

"She livens her up considerably at times," laughed Mrs. Curtis.

"Livens her up!" echoed Raymond, "I should think Hope would feel as though she had a stick of dynamite beside her, and live in mortal terror of the first whack. Gee whiz, she keeps even me guessing, and I don't think I'm troubled with nerves."

So it was not surprising that Raymond regarded with some misgivings the invitation extended to Mr. and Mrs. Packard and Beatrice to accompany them on their outing

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE 167

to The Goblin's Cave. But if his misgivings were aroused by that fact, they were doubled the day Beatrice elected to pay the visit above mentioned.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Raymond's friends were lying about in the happy-go-lucky attitudes of your true midshipman, who is absolutely indifferent as to what forms his resting place. Toots was stretched at full length upon the soft lawn, utterly regardless of grass stains upon white flannels. Tubby was luxuriating in a big East India chair, picking away upon a mandolin. The "Kid" was beside Hope, showing her his photographs of the Academy, of which he had a fine collection.

Raymond had gone out to the garage to see that his car was in perfect order for the morrow, for both the Curtis cars as well as one hired for the day were to be sent down the lake early in the morning, there to await the arrival of the picnic party which would go down on the Idlewild, the cars being sent

to convey them from the landing up the mountain to the cave.

Now, as has before been stated, Beatrice never visited Ruheheute without special invitation or special permission, but there must always be exceptions to prove a rule, it seems. In the present instance the exception came when Mr. and Mrs. Packard were suddenly called from Sans Souci by the illness of Mrs. Packard's mother. Before leaving, Mrs. Packard wrote a hasty note to Mrs. Curtis, bidding her butler see to its prompt delivery. But the Packard's African butler was less reliable than Saito. He did exactly what the majority of his race do—he forgot.

Beatrice, who heard the order given knew that the letter contained the request that she be allowed to accompany the party, and was on the alert for Mrs. Curtis' reply. Meanwhile, to pass the time more quickly, she decided to have a good time at home during her mother's absence, and to this end, she invited five of the Colts to visit her.

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE 169

Beatrice was very democratic in her choice of friends. They ranged from the small daughter of the governor of the State, to Seraphiny Elise Brown, the youngest offspring of Woodrow Wilson Brown, the butler, and Cora Amelia Brown, his wife, the laundress of the Packard establishment.

Once, when Beatrice was about seven years of age and some of her more aristocratic friends had presumed to criticise her plebian taste, they had drawn about their over-solicitous heads a perfect hornet's nest of the small defender's wrath. When twitted that her friends were "Common" she retorted:

"It's no such thing! It's only because their fathers haven't enough money to buy them as pretty clothes as yours buy for you! Anyway, they can think quicker'n some of you stupid heads can, and can play hard and take all sort of bangs. You are all afraid you'll get your precious noses bumped."

This retort had led to rather strained relations for a time.

So the Colts were invited and came in force, and they and Seraphiny Brown certainly enjoyed full swing. The first game was "Circus," Beatrice's idea of one being upon the scale of the New York Hippodrome, whereas her guests' conception of such a show was limited to those seen upon very rare occasions at Ticonderoga. The balance of the two produced very fair results, however, with Cassandra, King Coal, several dogs, Tiger, the white rabbit, Granny Quack, and heaven-knows-what-not in the way of luckless live stock, to figure in various roles. But in time "Circus" palled and Vaudeville succeeded. Now the Colts had about as much idea of what a Vaudeville show was as a hen has of the Board of Trade, but they were game, and Beatrice undertook to enlighten them, and in the course of enlightenment decided that a monkey was needed in the show. Unhappily none of the Colts were by nature

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE 171

fitted to act the part, being either tow-headed or red-headed. But! Seraphiny was a close mark already! Little, black, stupid, wooley-headed Seraphiny. The only shortcoming lay in the fact, that, odd freak of nature, Seraphiny's kinky wool had actually grown enough to be coaxed into the semblance of braids about three inches long, said braids being the joy and pride of Cora Amelia's soul. She spent hours in persuading them to be braids, and then tying them past all possibility of escape from *remaining* braids until the weekly hair-dressing again took place.

But it was ordained that Seraphiny should be transformed into an exponent of Darwin's theory, which was compassed by many bribes in the form of "eats," one of Beatrice's best frocks, and endless gew-gaws. When Seraphiny emerged from Beatrice's transforming hands, her Simian ancestors (?) could never for a second have denied the relationship. Of course, a monkey could not have braids,—

not even three-inch-long-ones,—and look the part. This little monkey left nothing to be desired and, being by nature endowed with innumerable monkey characteristics, she instantly became the star performer. Then followed refreshments.

As the coast was absolutely clear, the Colts were treated to everything the pantry had to offer, the feast being finished off with liberal potations of grape juice. Indeed, every available bottle was emptied—either into the Colts, or upon them, and the pantry floor impartially, and all were literally filled to overflowing.

It was during her forage for the feast that Beatrice came upon the forgotten note. “Now I’ve simply got to take this letter straight over to Mrs. Curtis! Mamma would be wild if she knew Brown hadn’t delivered it and he’s gone over to the mainland. Come on, you can all go with me. You look just lovely in your Vaudeville costumes, and Hope and—and—oh, all the

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE 173

others will be tickled to death to see you."

"But we dassent go 'thout askin' ma," demurred Sapphire.

"Nonsense. Of course you 'dare' if I say so. I'm Miss Hope's best friend."

"Yer better 'phone up ter the Beehive and ask first," advised Tarus, with a sudden accession of precaution.

"Naw; Don'tcher! Ma'd say 'No,' yer boob, don'tcher know that much?" objected Leo. "Let's go right away."

Now well enough each Colt knew that Ruheheute was proscribed territory, but if Miss Beatrice said "go," did not that alter the situation? At all events, duty and inclination for once went hand in hand. Then, too, Beatrice had fully resolved to reach Ruheheute either by hook or by crook during her parents' absence, and the note was a most legitimate excuse.

"Come on all of you, and do just exactly as I tell you," ordered their hostess, and the party set off, following the broad seawall.

But unluckily, upon the way a violent argument arose between Tarus and Topaz regarding the ability of a girl to swim if she fell overboard with her clothes on. The argument waxed hot. Topaz insisted that of course she could, Tarus that she could not.

They had reached the dividing hedge between Ruheheute and Beunavista when Beatrice constituted herself referee, practical demonstrator and proof of her sex's claim to "swim as good as any boy," by promptly diving head-first from the sea-wall into the lake, swimming like a mermaid for a hundred yards and landing on the Curtis' side of the hedge amidst the derisive or triumphant shouts of her followers. She emerged exactly at the foot of the lawn upon which Hope and her friends were enjoying themselves, the Colts and Seraphiny scrambling through the hedge and bursting upon their audience's sight simultaneously.

"Merciful powers!" cried Hope. "Where have they come from?"

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE 175

"Holy smoke and oakum!" exclaimed Toots, bounding to his feet.

"What in the name of the uncanny have we here?" were Tubby's words.

"I say, Hope, where do you keep these curiosities ordinarily?" asked Dicky, as Raymond's voice behind him shouted:

"What the duece do you kids mean by piling over here in this way?"

But Beatrice, though dripping like a water spaniel, was equal to the occasion. Snatching her mother's note from Sapphire, into whose hand she had thrust it as she made her dive, she cried:

"It's me—Beatrice Packard—and I had to come to bring this to your mother, Raymond. Please give it to her right off and tell me what she says. I brought my friends along because they were visiting me, and I thought Hope would be delighted to see our costumes, and because—because—well because I had to," ended the young lady, dripping puddles upon the turf.

"But you'll catch your death, you crazy little kid. You ought to be wrung out," protested Raymond.

"Piffle! That's what you'd say. Do you think I'm such a poor sport as that? What's a swim on a hot day like this. Here, take this letter, please, then introduce your friends to me. They look mighty nice. Then we'll give you "Moving Day in Jungletown." Seraphiny's the monkey and we're all something else. Now don't you children get cold feet and make a sneak. Do you hear me?" she ended, casting a warning glance over her shoulder at the petrified Colts who felt from Raymond's tone that their sins had found them out, and who were sorely tempted to "make a sneak."

Meanwhile Toots had rolled over on the grass fairly howling with laughter, while Tubby tuning up his mandolin and striking up "Moving Day in Jungletown," cried:

"Open the show! Orchestra's all ready."

"Who on earth is the kid?" asked Dicky of

BEATRICE OPENS VAUDEVILLE 177

Hope, but before she could answer Beatrice had marshalled her performers and was issuing orders like a veteran stage-manager and the next moment the act was on, the performers having in a measure recovered from their terror and become imbued with their leader's spirit. It was a most original dance, the sunshine and rapid motion serving somewhat to dry out the leader. In the midst of it Mr. and Mrs. Curtis came upon the scene and Raymond handed the latter the note. She read it and gasped under her breath:

“How can I refuse under the circumstances, but, oh, for a cordon of police to keep that child within bounds and get her home from the cave without something happening to her!”

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOBLIN'S CAVE

The following morning Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, with Hope, Miss Forrester, Tubby, Toots and Dicky, and the four young girls from the Hotel, to say nothing of Beatrice, embarked upon the Idlewild at ten o'clock. Raymond with Saito and another servant were to make the run down the lake in Raymond's car, carrying the luncheon, which was in Saito's able charge, the two chauffeurs to take Mr. Curtis' car and the extra one hired from the hotel for the occasion. It was a merry party, though it must be admitted that Mrs. Curtis would have been more at ease in her mind had the youngest member of those comprising it, been safe at Buenavista instead of on board the yacht.

Not until they had gotten under way did it

occur to Mrs. Curtis that their party numbered thirteen. Then she called her husband's attention to the fact.

He promptly laughed at her. "You are surely not foolishly superstitious about that, are you dear?"

"Oh, I don't know, Raymond. Perhaps Hope's long invalidism had made me super-sensitive to trifles, but—well—it is an old superstition, you'll admit, and everything has been progressing so well of late. I don't want to tempt Providence," smiled. Mrs. Curtis, her eyes so full of love for the little figure reclining upon a well-cushioned steamer chair, for Hope had actually attained to that.

"Then I won't sit down to the feast with the others," laughed Mr. Curtis.

"Indeed you *will*!" protested his wife. "Don't think me quite so foolish as that," and nothing further was said.

The beautiful little steam yacht cut through the crystal blue lake, the waves sparkling in the sunlight, the soft wind playing gaily with

the waving colors at the stern, all on board in merry mood and holiday spirits.

It was a restless stirring party, however, the young people exploring every corner of the craft, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis and Miss Forrester enjoying for the hundredth time the beautiful scenery, though it must be confessed that Mrs. Curtis found ample occupation in keeping Beatrice in sight.

Hope was pointing out the different resorts and naming the towering mountains, "The Sleeping Beauty," Mt. Erebus, and others to Dicky, who sat beside her. It was his first visit to the lake, in fact none of Raymond's guests had ever visited it before, Tubby's home being in Idaho, and Toot's and Dicky's in California.

"I say, but it's great!" was Dicky's enthusiastic praise. "Not so—so—tremendous and sort of—of overwhelming as our California scenery, but more like—like, oh, hang it! *I'm* no good at describing things. Only I know how it makes me *feel inside*."

"I know what you mean. I never come down the lake without feeling as though I'd gotten away from a world where anything dreadful could happen, or there could be any sadness, and had gone off, far away into a new world where everybody is happy and well and strong and—and—" Hope paused and colored. She had for a moment forgotten that she was talking to a lad, who was almost a stranger and only a few years her senior. She often talked in this strain to her mother.

"Go on, please," he said softly. His face was serious. Something in the beauty and helplessness of the child before him stirred all that was finest in his character, and it was a pretty fine one.

"You'll think me very queer and maybe sort of—of too goody-goody if I tell you and I don't think boys care to hear such things," hesitated Hope.

"Will you just please experiment on me? No one else is near to hear and I'm safe, all right."

Hope turned her expressive eyes toward his.

"Perhaps it is because I've been ill so long, and have to be alone so often that my thoughts are different from other girls. Or maybe it is because I am an Easter child,—I was born on Easter Day, you know—that I have strange fancies. I had such a wonderful dream last Easter morning; so wonderful that I have always believed it to be more than just a dream. It was so very real that it seemed like a promise—" she paused and looked off toward the towering heights of Black Mountain on the starboard bow.

"A promise of what? Who made it?" asked the practical boy beside her, though odd little creeps began running up and down his back.

"Saito said it was the great Lord Shaka's promise. His Lord Shaka is almost like our Christ. It was the day of His new life you know. Do you think it could have been a promise?" The big hazel eyes held Dicky's.

"What was the promise?" Dicky asked almost under his breath.

"I have never told it to anyone; not all of it, I mean, not even to Mother."

"Won't you please tell it to me?" he asked in a tone which he hardly recognized as his own.

"Perhaps you would laugh at me and think me just a silly girl."

"Little Sis!"

"Excuse me. But you see you don't know me very well. I'm not much like other girls whom you know, am I?"

"You're—you're clean out of sight. You've got the whole outfit beat to a standstill! I mean—" stammered the boy in confusion at having dropped into the most natural form of expression in his enthusiasm, "I mean you're—a wonder. Please go on."

Hope told her dream, then added: "I told that much to Mother but I didn't tell her that I dreamed that the Cardinal bird had promised

to come again—in another form—and that when he did come—I should walk.”

“Do you know in what form he is coming?” The question, softly spoken, was a strange one from the practical boy.

“The bird seemed—seemed to promise that—that—the Christ Child would come next time, and when I am up here in this wonderful world with all these great mountains reaching up to the sky, I seem so much closer to God and the Christ Child, and feel so much surer that the promise *will* come true in just a little while.”

She paused as the yacht ran by Deer's Leap on the port beam and came under Sugar Loaf Mountain on the starboard bow. The other members of the party were well forward exclaiming over the wonderful panorama.

“You won't tell?” queried Hope.

The boy held out his long, slender, muscular hand. The tiny one was placed in it.

“I shan't tell and I shan't forget either.

And—and may the good Lord send the Christ Child.”

Hope hardly caught the words. Just then Miss Forrester came up the gangway with Hope's beaten egg and milk and Dicky sprang to take it from her. The next second the laughing, happy-go-lucky midshipman was running Hope on being a confirmed young tippler who had to have her toddy at six bells of the forenoon Watch. But under the outer fun and nonsense was an indellible impression of that half-hour's talk, and before the day ended Richard Finch had reason to feel the deep significance of that little confidence.

It was high noon when the Idlewild sheered away from the heights of Anthony's ten-hundred-foot nose and ran alongside a small private dock at the foot of Roger's Slide on the opposite shore. The landing was soon made, the motor cars being at hand to take the party to the cave a half mile above the dock. The run was made without a flaw in the carefully laid program, and upon their

arrival at the Cave they found a wonderful luncheon all ready to be served by Saito and his assistant.

What a merry, happy hour ensued! Hope, joyous and radiant, enjoying it as only a child for years deprived of the pleasures common to other children of her age and station, could enjoy. It was like the first glimpse of the world of sunshine to one who has been blind for years; the first thrilling notes of a skylark to one who has been deaf.

When the feast was ended the young people were eager to explore the grotto, Hope having been settled in a quiet little woodland nook for the hour's rest upon which Miss Forrester insisted, and where, resting comfortably upon her pneumatic mattress, she soon fell asleep in spite of her protests that she knew her "eyes simply couldn't close." But Nature asserted her rights and while vigorous young bodies were darting thither and yonder through the mysterious depths and weird lights of the Goblin's Cave, or running like school-children

through the cathedral-like aisles of the woods, Hope was gaining her rejuvenation from the balsamic air as she slept.

Five o'clock, the hour set for the return to Sans Souci, came all too swiftly. There was only one person in the party who secretly breathed a sigh of relief as that hour drew near and that was Mrs. Curtis. The day had been a strenuous one for her, little as the others suspected that fact. Beatrice had seen to that. It had begun when Raymond saved her from a header over the Idlewild's bow as they sped out into the broad reaches of Hague Bay, and the young miss had elected to see the hawse pipes. Then had come a lively scene at the landing when she had made up her small mind to ride to the cave in Raymond's car instead of in the one conveying Mrs. Curtis and Hope, and Mrs. Curtis had to insist upon being obeyed. At luncheon the young lady had scorned the more substantial dishes, contending that a picnic wasn't a picnic if you had to eat the same old things you ate at your own

luncheon table. A picnic meant cake and sweets, and ices and lemonade and good things."

But as Mrs. Curtis did not wish to finish the day with a dose of nux vomica, she carried that point also.

When it came to exploring the cave she sent Saito to keep the lively one within bounds, telling Beatrice she must keep beside Saito under penalty of remaining behind, and bidding Saito not let the child out of his sight a single instant.

Whether Saito felt honored in his responsibility or not need not be dwelt upon, but it is certain that the small man resolved to fulfill his duty to the very letter, and for once in her brief life Miss Beatrice met her match. Try as she would she could not "shake that hateful little squint-eyed yellow man."

Consequently, she was not in the most amiable frame of mind when she got back to the camp, and had made up her mind to "get

even" with somebody; she had not a very clear idea with whom.

"Mrs. Curtis, please let me ride to the landing in Raymond's car? I've never ridden in it yet," she said, preparing to scramble up beside Raymond, who had already taken his seat, and who promptly said:

"No kid, there won't be room for you this time. Go long back to Mother."

"I don't wish to. I prefer to be with your set," objected the precocious one.

"Well, I'm sorry, but you can't make it this trip. I've got a full crew, so run along and quit fussin' " Perhaps Raymond's patronizing tone did more to enrage the little lady than anything else. It was "so humiliating to be treated like a child." Save the mark! But since there was no alternative, and Mrs. Curtis was calling to her, back she went.

Raymond's car was designed to carry seven, but this time it did extra duty, for not only did it carry Raymond and the four girls of the party, but Toots, Tubby and Dicky also.

They started as soon as all were "stowed," leaving the others to follow. Next to get under way was the car from the hotel in which Saito, his assistant and the chauffeur were to convey the hampers and rugs down to the Idlewild, and then with the lightened car make the homeward run, Raymond's car to be taken back by Saito. Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, Miss Forrester, Hope and Beatrice were to go down to the landing in Mr. Curtis' car.

As Hope was unable to sit upright as the others did, she was reclining as usual upon the little pallet which filled all one side of the tonneau. Miss Forrester sat next her and her mother upon the left side. Beatrice was to have occupied the little adjustable seat in front of Mrs. Curtis where that lady could keep a watchful eye upon her. But at the last moment she begged to sit in front with the chauffeur.

"Will you sit quietly, dear?" asked Mrs. Curtis. "You know it is a dangerous road."

"Yes, I'll sit quietly," was the reply.

Nevertheless, it was with secret misgiving that Mrs. Curtis saw her settled in front and Mr. Curtis take the chair in the tonneau. The run was barely a half mile, it is true, but it was a wild, rocky road and Mrs. Curtis had held her breath more than once when the run up from the yacht had been made. She would be thankful when they were safe on board.

"All ready? Are you comfortable, sweetheart?" asked Mr. Curtis of Hope.

"Snug as a bug in a rug, Daddy, and the happiest girl in this world!"

"Good! Go ahead, Pierre." The car started slowly down the steep mountain road. For a mountain road it was, to be sure, an unusually broad, and well made one, but all the making in the world cannot guard against the ravages which are made by the heavy, torrential thunder showers which so often visit Lake George.

The car had made about half the journey, and the Idlewild, lying at the dock far below,

was in sight, Raymond's friends already on board, the picnic car had been unloaded and was about to start upon its homeward journey. Saito was about starting. The two cars had to return by the road leading past the cave, there being no other in that wild region and must meet Mr. Curtis' car. Just then Mr. Curtis' car dipped into a bit of pine woods which shut off all view of the lake. A little beyond was a sharp, and very dangerous turn, with a sheer precipice of two hundred feet on Hope's side of the car.

"Be very cautious, Pierre," warned Mr. Curtis.

"Oui, Monsieur," answered the chauffeur, his eyes upon the turn and his foot on his break.

The car had just crept down to the turn, Pierre advancing with the utmost caution, when Beatrice in the winking of an eye, sprang to her feet crying:

"Oh look at that big white owl sitting on that branch!"

At that instant the car made the turn, the child lost her balance, and fell heavily against Pierre, causing him to loose his hold upon the wheel, and throwing his foot off the break.

It was all over in an instant, as such terrible calamities always are, but when such of the occupants of the overturned car as could do so had scrambled to their feet Hope Curtis lay still and white upon a rocky ledge fifty feet below the road, and at the same instant Saito, with the cry of a lost soul, flung himself over the precipice and landed beside the motionless figure.

CHAPTER XIII

LOOKING BACKWARD

Three weeks have passed since that day of horror upon Lake George. A day which began so auspiciously, which held so much happiness, but ended so tragically.

Merciful unconsciousness had come to Mrs. Curtis as her eyes fell upon the inert form lying upon the narrow ledge of rock fifty feet below the road. A foot further and Hope would have fallen to the bottom of the precipice. Truly the Higher Power must have held her in the hollow of his hand and laid her upon the bed of pine needles with which the rock was so thickly carpeted.

Saito had raised Hope's head, and pressed his hand against the fluttering heart, calling to those above:

"Some beat! No mage dead! Queek, help

up! Ropes from boat! Big blanket! Mage hurry!"

Mr. Curtis had sent the car for help, and for a time all seemed confusion, yet under rapid direction order was brought forth, while Mrs. Curtis was hurried down to the Idlewild, and soon afterward four of the crew bore aboard the pallet with its unconscious burden.

Roger's Rock Hotel was the nearest point at which communication with the outer world could be obtained and to this point the Idlewild had made record speed.

There a physician was found and from that point phone messages and telegrams had been sent far and near, the latter overtaking Dr.—— at Montreal and bringing him to Ruheheute at top speed.

Twenty-four hours later the Curtis family had returned to their home in ——th street. And what a return compared with the setting forth!

Hope was alive, yes, but that was about all which could be said. She had never spoken

from the moment she replied to her father's question regarding her comfort, and how well he remembered those words. "The happiest girl in this world." From that moment she had looked out over the wonderful lake spread before her, her face the very picture of content and happiness. Days had since passed while in her suite with Miss Forrester, Miss Woodward, and two other skilled nurses in attendance, she lay hour after hour fighting her battle for life. Meanwhile Mrs. Curtis, the limit of strength and nerve strain at last reached, lay tossing in delirium in her room below while friends and dear ones waited with bated breath for the outcome. Not only was Dr. ——'s skill taxed to the limit, but Dr. Hartmann's hands and mind were more than full.

The great French surgeon had returned to Paris, only a few days after the accident there performing wonderful cures, and after a month had passed without any apparent

change in Hope's condition Dr. ——— cabled abroad.

In another week the house in ———th street was again closed and left in Michael's care, and Mr. and Mrs. Curtis with Miss Forrester, Miss Woodward, Lizette, Saito and Dr. ——— were on board the great *Lusitania* bound for Paris, all else giving way to the urgent needs of the two dear invalids, though Mrs. Curtis, was now out of danger and mending rapidly. Long before the voyage ended she was able to sit beside Hope's couch, though the little girl could only smile at her and whisper a word or two; words so precious because invariably words of encouragement for those she loved best.

She did not suffer. Indeed, those watching her would have been almost glad of evidences of pain because that would have been proof of sensation. But since that terrible fall there had been absolutely no voluntary motion; just this hopeless discouraging paralysis which baffled all treatment. Day after day

had passed in her silent room without the slightest change.

Saito now acted as courier and valet and also served in a thousand other capacities. One morning Mr. Curtis said to his wife:

"What should we do without that little Jap? He anticipates every wish, every need. He is absolutely tireless and I would rather trust to his judgment than my own. We can never reward him for his devotion to us and to Hope. But, Violet, have you noticed that he has never smiled since that dreadful day, and never speaks unless spoken to? He used to be all bows and smiles and deferential greetings, but now a shadow could hardly be more silent."

"Yes, he feels Hope's condition keenly. He has always been so devoted to her. Yet at times I have distrusted him, Raymond."

"On what grounds, dear?" was Mr. Curtis' surprised question.

"I wish I had more valid ones for my distrust. At least, I wish I could *dismiss* all

doubt at once and forever because it really has so little foundation. I am afraid it is purely feminine intuition, yet I have always felt that Saito is not what he seems—just a Japanese butler—because he is certainly very superior to those of his class who seek such employment. He is obviously well educated and has a very fair knowledge of French.”

“How did you discover that?” asked Mr. Curtis quickly.

“I found him reading a French book one afternoon at home and later learned that he could both write and speak the language. That his English is so faulty surprises me, for as a rule the Japanese acquire our language very readily, yet he has been in our country three years.”

“Well, he probably does not intend to remain in it forever. But sufficient unto the day. He is with us *now* and has saved me a thousand annoyances, spared me endless trouble. How I should have closed the house, attended to the details incident to a long

absence from the office, in short have accomplished one tenth of what I have accomplished, without Saito's omnipresence, I can not possibly guess. Why he has practically planned everything and I have only had to sign the cheques to meet the expenses."

And there the discussion dropped. Three days later they were in Paris. A week later the operation was performed. Then followed weeks of careful nursing, and alternating doubt and hope.

How little the surgeon could promise.

"Time! Time! Time! Care! Care! Care! Patience! Patience! Patience! my dear Madam," was all he would say.

"But I have been patient so long! And *could* she have had greater care?"

The tone in which the words were spoken was like a cry of despair.

He laid his hand upon Mrs. Curtis' shoulder. The touch was full of the tenderest compassion and his words carried greater comfort than he guessed.

“Dear Madam, it is the care of the past seven years which is telling now. Had she not had it she would not be with you at this moment. It has enabled her to survive the shock which I have from the beginning felt to be her only hope for ultimate recovery. Yet, even as I spoke the words in your beautiful home in America, I dreaded the thought of what it might mean, just as you dreaded it. Perhaps more, for I knew it meant so much. I little dreamed how soon my words would be put to the proof. Perhaps they were prophetic. We can not know. We cannot tell. We see darkly. I have done my best for the child but I must leave the rest with le Bon Dieu who gave me my skill. I am only his instrument. A far from perfect one, alas! and with very human limitations. Yet so far it has proved to be as I predicted. The fall made it possible to perform the operation upon the hip. The paralysis was, it is true, the result of the fall, but a result less serious to cope with, though it appeared more alarm-

ing. I do not dare encourage you too much, yet this I firmly believe, that within a short time there will be a decided change and God grant it may be for the better. At first all will seem dark and discouraging. Take her to the Riviera for the Winter and see what the soft air will do for the little girl. With all my heart I say Dieu vous garde."

So passed November and December. That Christmas day was the saddest Mrs. Curtis had ever known. They strove to bring some cheer and joy into it but with very doubtful success. Now January was upon them. Not the cold, bleak January of Northern Europe, or of the city over the sea, but the semi-tropical Christmas of the Mediterranean. As the month advanced Hope grew strangely restless. Mrs. Curtis was troubled. She watched the child with redoubled vigilance.

One beautiful morning as they sat upon the broad terrace of the charming villa which Mr. Curtis had rented, Hope was looking out across the sapphire blue waters of the sea.

Presently she sighed deeply. Her face was turned from her mother. Mrs. Curtis bent quickly forward and to her dismay found the child's eyes filled with tears.

"Why, my darling! What is it?" she cried, as she dropped upon her knees beside the couch and laid her arms about the beloved little form.

Hope nestled close in the encircling arms, a little sob escaping her lips; a sound so rarely heard, yes, almost unknown, that Mrs. Curtis' heart sank.

"Tell Mother, sweetheart. Are you in pain?"

"No, not in the least, only—oh mother I don't know *what* ails me. I am so restless and cross. I try not to be, I truly do, but I don't seem to be able to help it. I don't believe I know *what* I want,—unless—unless—"

She paused and again looked longingly out over the sea. Mrs. Curtis gently turned the lovely little face toward her, saying:

"My little girl, something is troubling you,

and I must know what it is. If father or I can remove the cause you know we live for little else."

"I know it Mumsey, dear, and that is the reason I'm ashamed of myself. No girl ever had so much done for her, I am sure, and so I try to be patient and not get the fidgets as I have today, but—I—Mother—it is lovely, here isn't it? There couldn't be a more beautiful spot in the world I am sure,—but—but—don't you think it must be snug and cosy in Ruhevoll? And Bistri and Scheherazade must be lonely without me. I love my window and St. Stephen's choir. Do you think Mr. Sands will be home now? And Beatrice——"

"Oh, don't dear!" The words were almost a cry, for from that awful hour Mrs. Curtis had shuddered at the mention of the child's name. Indeed, she was never spoken of in her presence.

"Forgive me, Mumsey, I forgot, but—

can't you forgive Bee? She did not mean to, you know?"

"Did not mean to! Did not mean to! Oh, the world is filled with those who do not mean to, but who bring ruin to so many. I can't bear to think of her."

Never before had Mrs. Curtis given way to her feelings to this extent, and now she strove to recover her self-control. She had never seen Beatrice from that hour. Mr. and Mrs. Packard had called again and again, and done all in their power to make some reparation for the calamity caused by the child's disobedience, though well Mrs. Packard knew that its true cause lay at her own door.

"I try to forgive and forget, dear, but when I think of what her one brief second's disobedience has cost *you* it is almost beyond my power to do so. Let us talk of something pleasanter. Tell me the cause of the tears, and let me send it to the right-about. We cannot have them in these

eyes," and Mrs. Curtis pressed her lips to the soft eyes raised to hers and again smiling.

"Mother, in just a little while Easter will be here; it comes very early this year, you know, and will fall on my birthday again. I mean my birthday will fall on *Easter Day*. I want to be in Ruhevoll when it does. Can't we go home soon? I think I shall grow strong more quickly if I am in my own nest, I love it so. Will you ask Daddy? I want to go home. I am so homesick."

Two weeks later the Curtis home was opened and the little Daisy Maiden re-established in Ruhevoll.

CHAPTER XIV

SAITO TAKES A HOLIDAY

The homeward voyage had been the very elixir of life to Hope, each mile whirled behind her by the rapidly revolving propellers had carried her toward new life. Had it been anticipation of returning to old scenes and the familiar surroundings which she had always loved so dearly? Or were the French surgeon's words soon to be realized? Whatever the cause each succeeding day had brought marked improvement and the homecoming had been HOPE figuratively and literally.

Re-established in Ruhevoll, with her pets about her, the sunshine she so loved flooding her window, and hickory logs blazing cheerily upon the andirons, she seemed more like

Hope incarnate than ever. The old order of things had returned.

Miss Forrester and Miss Woodward grew cheerier; their faces lost the lines of anxiety which for more than four months had rested upon them. Lizette was the happiest creature imaginable, for was not her charge safe at home again? Lizette had gone home to Switzerland for a long holiday while Hope was in Paris, but when she learned the family's decision to return to America without delay she begged to return with them in spite of the fact that Mr. Curtis wished her to remain until her six-months' holiday was ended.

"Non, not in Switzerland when ma petite is in America. The long distance; the great ocean between us? Non! Non! I make ze return wiz her."

And Saito? Saito was more of a puzzle to Mrs. Curtis than ever, and at the same time more invaluable.

Soon after the return to ——th Street, Saito asked for a short vacation, saying that

he wished to go to Washington to visit some friends. Mr. Curtis was only too glad to grant his request, and just before his departure handed him a very generous cheque.

"Use this for your holiday, Saito, my boy, and have a good time. You have certainly earned a vacation, but nothing which Mrs. Curtis or I can give to you can ever repay your devotion to us and to your Yoshi-Ko, as you call her. Those of your native land regard gratitude as one of the highest virtues. You have ours in full measure, Saito. And remember this my boy: If you ever need a friend; if you are ever in need of any assistance which it lies in my power to give to you, come or send to me at once."

As he ceased speaking Mr. Curtis held out his hand and smiled his kindly, winning smile.

For a second Saito hesitated, then placed his small, slender hand in the strong firm one.

"Curtis-Sama most honorably good. Thad gratitude? Yes—ad Japan we all.

time thing must be. Him no should mage *live* whad no god thad grad-i-tude. Bud me, Saito? Perhaps no can feel? What Curtis-Sama thingin' 'bout thad?"

Saito's expression was incomprehensible to Mr. Curtis. Indeed, he had long since ceased trying to understand this strange little man, but had made up his mind to accept him as he found him from day to day. It was useless to attempt to fathom his thoughts. They seemed so entirely unlike the trend of an American's thoughts. So in reply to Saito's last question Mr. Curtis said:

"We say in this country, Saito, that 'actions speak louder than words.' Do you understand it? And surely your devotion to Miss Hope has been an unending, untiring evidence of your gratitude for any consideration we may have shown you. We would better let your actions speak for you. We do not need words, I can only add, God bless you for your devotion to my little child."

Mr. Curtis turned abruptly and left the room.

Saito's eyes followed him, but his expression did not change until Mr. Curtis' last footfall died away and silence filled the library. Then the little man did a strange thing. He crossed the room to a table upon which stood a beautiful miniature of Hope painted by a famous artist just before they left Paris. He had caught the child's wonderful expression and exquisite coloring to a rare degree and the face looking out from the jeweled frame was indeed as pure as the sur-goddess of Saito's religion.

Long and intently he gazed upon the picture, then replacing it upon the table prostrated himself before it, murmuring in his own tongue:

"Lead me aright, oh gracious one. Guide my footsteps, control my hand, teach my heart and give me the wisdom *and* the gratitude, for I am as a ship tossed by the waves; a tiny vessel without sail or rudder; a child

who wanders in a strange land. The mind and the heart are at war with each other. Have mercy and graciously point the way to the most humble of thy servants."

Just then a light step was audible upon the stairs and when Miss Forrester entered the library Saito was laying another log upon the andirons.

"Ah, Saito, can you tell me what has become of 'The Golden Lotus'? Miss Hope wishes me to read her one of the tales from it."

"Mos' sure, I bring him bag' and put him on shelf all same place thad odder books live. Saito ged?"

A moment later Miss Forrester held the book in her hand. Thanking Saito she returned to Hope's room.

Two days later Saito asked permission to bid Hope good-by. He brought with him a beautiful pot of narcissi.

Bowing low he offered it to Hope saying:

"Saito mage farewell ad Yoshi-Ko. Mage

offering Ingo-so for while some time Saito far away. Inyo-so all same the gread Hino-hime and Saito: Boy-girl. Shaka watch both; mage all ride all time Saito goin' Wash-eng-ton. Comin' bag in liddle bid while."

The Narcissus is called the Plant of the Two Sexes because in Japan it comes in the winter and lasts until the spring of the following year. Saito wished to convey the idea that it was symbolical of Hope and himself and if it remained fresh and fragrant during his absence all would be well with her and with him. At Christmas he had given her a wonderful Japanese book called "The Art of Floral Arrangement." Consequently she fully understood the significance of his offering.

"Ah, Saito, you are so good. How do you think of all the wonderful things you do for me? And you have taught me so many lovely legends of the flowers. Why, every one has a beautiful story to tell me now, but

if you had not come to live with us I should never have known a single thing about them. They would have been just flowers to me—any old flowers, I dare say,” laughed Hope. “What dull, stupid folk we must seem to the Japanese people who find a beautiful story in everything which lives and grows. The Inyo-so are sweet and I shall think of you Saito, whenever I look at them. And be sure I shall take the greatest care of them to keep all well between thee and me while we are parted. It can all be said in one word. Do you know that?

“One word? Thad wish?” Saito looked puzzled. “Yoshi-Ko speag thad word for Saito?”

“Mizpah, Miz-pah,” repeated Hope slowly.

“Mees-pah. Mees-pah. Saito have god. Saito keep. Yes?”

“Isn’t it a dear word, Saito? And, oh, Saito I can give *you* a talisman, too. Father gave it to me in Mentone.”

Hope drew from her finger a curious ring,

and held it out so Saito could read the inscription encircling it. The ring was a band of dark blue enamel with the word Mizpah in gold upon it.

For a moment Saito hesitated. Hope believing him to be embarrassed smilingly took his left hand in hers and slipped the ring upon his slender finger, saying with the smile so like her father's:

"God keep watch over thee and me when we are parted, Saito."

How softly her sweet voice spoke those words. Saito trembled as he looked into the beautiful eyes raised to his. Then he dropped upon one knee, and raising Hope's hand rested his forehead upon it for the briefest moment.

As he rose to his feet Hope retained his hand and in one of the sweet little carressing actions so native to her pressed her velvety cheek to it, saying:

"When you press my hand to your forehead you mean that you love me, I know,

Saito. But to show you that I also love you I press my cheek to yours."

Somehow Saito always seemed a mere boy to Hope: He was so small. How little she dreamed the true meaning of his act, or the influence her own half-playful, half-serious one would have upon her own life and those dearest to her. If the Japanese can turn white Saito certainly turned white at that moment. Then falling into Japanese he spoke rapidly, Hope interrupting him with a merry laugh and saying:

"Ah, Saito, Saito! Now you have it quite all your own way. You know I can't follow your language. Come back to mine please."

And Saito came back in a manner which amazed Hope, for he said in purest English:

"Yes, the great Christian God *will* watch between thee and me." Then in the deepest confusion added: "Saito must *mage* the hurry. Railway train no *mage* wait for one

liddle man. Arigato. Arigato. Sayonara. Sayonara, O Hinohime."

A moment later he had gone and Hope turning to her mother asked:

"Did you hear him repeat my words? How could he catch the words and the accent so perfectly? Why there wasn't any accent at all. That is the funny part of it all. Yet he has always spoken such queer English. Dear me, he is so odd. I wonder if we shall ever, ever really understand him, Mother?"

"I am sure I never shall, dear. He has always been a puzzle to me and instead of growing less of a puzzle he becomes a greater one. It will seem odd to have him away, but I half believe I shall feel relieved. Sometimes his strange Oriental ways fidget me. I doubt I'm growing a fussy old lady."

"Fussy old lady! Mumsey, hush! What did the boys say when they were at the Lake last summer? That you were just as much of a girl as the best of them,—I mean the girls at the hotel,—and Raymond said you

were his best girl any way. So be good and forget all about Saito for a little while if he bothers you. If he ever bothers *me* then you may send him to the right-about. Now if that isn't setting myself up for a very important young person I'd like to know what can be."

"You are the most important young person in this house," asserted Mrs. Curtis.

"To be sure I am because there isn't any other," laughed Hope.

But Mrs. Curtis was not permitted to forget Saito so quickly.

He had been absent about a week when a friend calling upon her said:

"I wish you could have been at Mrs. Drummond's reception last evening; there was the most remarkable little man present, a Japanese. He was perfectly fascinating, and I have never heard such faultless, beautiful English as he spoke. He has recently come from the University of Tokio, sent here, I understand, by his government in

the interests of some scientific research. Why, I believe that little man's head held enough knowledge for half a dozen ordinary men. Violet, I wish you *would* go out more. You really ought not bury yourself alive in this manner, not even for Hope. She has the most perfect care in the world and is doing wonders. Everyone can see that."

"Yes, and I wish her to continue to. I made one mistake which very nearly cost her life. I shall not make another, Olive. But what was the name of your little Japanese wonder, and what did he look like?"

"His name was Mr. Togashi, but to describe his looks? Well, that is quite beyond me. I am afraid it is somewhat like that ridiculous song Ned is forever singing 'All coons look alike to me.' I am sure all Japs look alike to me, only I must say this one had one distinguishing mark by which I shall be able to recognize him among his fellows if I ever again come across him: He had an odd little patch of white hair, no larger than

a half dollar, low down at the back of his head. Why what ails you, Violet? You look as startled as though I had said he grew half dollars upon his head instead of hair," laughed Mrs. Curtis' friend.

"Nothing, I often start in that way. I dare say I am a trifle nervous."

"That exactly bears out what I am saying. *Will* you go out more?"

"We'll see," smiled Mrs. Curtis, as her friend took leave.

When alone Mrs. Curtis stood for a moment in deep thought. What singular coincidence was this? Saito had just such a peculiar patch of hair low down upon the back of his head. Perhaps a dozen Japanese men might have, but it was hardly likely. But on the other hand Saito's English was very imperfect and Saito at that moment was in Washington. Of this she was sure because the morning mail had brought Hope a curious little silver bracelet which he had sent to her. But Mrs. Curtis could not forget that one

perfectly spoken English sentence the morning Saito left Ruhevoll. Oh, what a puzzle it all was.

CHAPTER XV

“IT RAINS, AND THE WIND IS NEVER WEARY.”

Perhaps the entire quotation would best describe the first day of March, though there were no leaves to cling to the ivy which mantled the entire west side of the house. They had long since turned to mold.

But if the world beyond Hope's window was “wild, wet and dreary,” there was no lack of cheeriness in Ruhevoll, and Hope was the cheeriest object of all as she reclined in her easy chair.

During the past two weeks her condition had improved to a degree which had amazed even Miss Forrester.

“Why, you are growing stronger by leaps and bounds, honey,” she had said to her patient only that afternoon, for to her amazement Hope had asked to sit in the big cush-

ioned chair. At first Miss Forrester demurred, fearing it would over-tax her strength.

"Please let me try; just for a little while," begged the child.

"Will you let me know the very first second you feel the slightest fatigue, dear? I dare not risk that, you know."

"Even an ache in my little finger," was Hope's merry answer.

So, settled in her window, with Scherazade in her lap, Bistri upon the window seat, and Timbuctoo performing all sorts of funny antics upon his bar, she sat a veritable little princess in her bower, for flower-filled vases stood all about the room and the window was a garden of palms and blossoming plants.

Near at hand Mrs. Curtis sat working upon a bit of fancy work.

"Mother, in just nineteen days I shall be twelve years old! Think of that! Then come the teens. Do you remember how proud Raymond was when he got into his teens? I was only a little bit of a thing,—

it was just before I was hurt, wasn't it? But I remember that birthday, though I don't seem to remember much about those which followed."

"That is not surprising," replied Mrs. Curtis with a slight shudder. She had no difficulty in recalling every one.

"Don't let us even think of them if they make that tone come into your voice, Mumsey. Let us think of mine, which will be here in less than three weeks. Oh, I do so wish Raymond could spend it with me! Only think how long it is since I have seen him. Five whole months. Sometimes I just hate those old regulations which keep him shut up at Annapolis when we are doing delightful things. But, Mother, in three months we shall have him home a real, real, truly-true Ensign! Won't you be the proudest mother in the whole world and shan't I be the proudest little sister? And, Mother, come close, please, because I want to whisper a wonderful secret in your ear. Promise you

won't tell? Not even to Daddy. It is to be just your secret and mine."

Mrs. Curtis bent smilingly toward Hope: These little confidences were very precious to her.

"I'll keep the secret forever and a day, dear, what is it?"

Hope laid a hand on either side of her mother's face and drew her ear close to her lips, whispering softly:

"On June seventh Raymond graduates and I am going to Annapolis to see him! And I am going to walk into that big armory of which he has shown me the picture. What do you think of that?"

Mrs. Curtis tried to control her start of surprise. Drawing back, she looked into Hope's eyes. Was the child serious? Did she really believe her own words? Or was it only her indomitable courage and unquenchable hope? The face so close to her own was radiant, the eyes shone like stars.

"Dear little girl 'thy own wish, wish I

thee in every place,' as well you know, but this one seems almost beyond our wildest dreams, does it not? Yet what would it mean to me to see this dream of your life a reality? Nothing could mean half so much as you well know. Yet, darling, please do not think too much about it. It breaks mother's heart to have you disappointed."

To her mother's surprise Hope laughed a low, confident little laugh, then whispered:

"I am not going to *be* disappointed, Mumsey, and neither are you, because it is *all quite true*. Have you forgotten? Don't you know that this birthday falls upon Easter day again?"

"No, dear, heart, I have not forgotten. Nor have I forgotten that upon that day, also, you will be confirmed. The Sacrament can not be taken in St. Stephens, that is true, and we both regret it, but Bishop Pendleton will be our guest and with Father and Mother present it will be very sacred, very beautiful. My little daughter will truly be one of Christ's

children, though I have always felt her to be singularly one on account of her birthday."

"It will be a wonderful day, Mother. I can't help feeling the most wonderful of my whole life. My dream last Easter Day seemed so much more than a dream, you know."

"Yes, dear. I understand. Please God all will be well with you ere long. Yes, Lizette, what is it?" for at that moment the maid came to the door.

"It is Saito, Madam. He has returned. He asks to see Miss Hope."

"Oh, I am so glad! Please have him come up, Mother. I want so much to see him."

"You may tell him to come upstairs, Lizette."

A moment later Saito stood smiling in the doorway. He held a small parcel in his hand.

"Hai-yaku-hai Okka-san! O Hinohime! Saito mage the return. Comin' bag ad Taka-miya. Mage happy lige bird to see

again. Saito bringin' Yoshi-Ko so mos' mos' worthless liddle gif'. Mos' poor gif'. Mebbe Yoshi-Ko don' lige whicheven. Then can fling away. Will Yoshi-Ko be so honorably good as loog at liddle gif'?"

While speaking Saito drew nearer and nearer, at the same time removing from its wrapping a beautiful little lacquered box which he handed to Hope.

"Ah, Saito, it was quite enough to come back to me yourself. I have missed you so much. You should not have brought me another gift. You have given me so many already. I hope you had a delightful holiday," said Hope as she untied the ribbon upon the box, Mrs. Curtis adding, "Yes, Saito, we all hope that I am sure."

"Oh, Mother, look! Isn't it exquisite?"

Saito's gift was a priceless bit of Japanese ivory carving representing the god Shaka seated in the center of his golden Lotus flower. Saito had long ago given her the book which

told the legend. This bit of ivory carving was a rare work of art.

"Yoshi-Ko have the joy? She mage happy to have great god Shaka?" asked Saito, smiling and bowing, seemingly as happy as a child himself.

It is wonderfully beautiful, Saito. I am so pleased with it. See, I shall keep it upon this little bracket right here in my window where I can always look at it. Then I shall think of you when I do so and shall remember that he is to you all *that* picture is to me," and Hope pointed to the copy of West's painting hanging upon the wall.

"Yes, all same. Great god. And Yoshi-Ko gedding bedder all same time queek. Nod on bed now. Sit up like Okka-san. Saito mage happy lige singing. Now Saito goin' see all so nize for serving dinner when Curtis-Sama comin' home. Ah-bah!" (Good-by.)

With more bows he departed. As he left the room the little patch of white hair was

made more evident by the inky black hair surrounding it. The glimpse gave Mrs. Curtis a peculiar sensation. It is safe to add that had she followed Saito's movements for the ensuing six or seven hours, she would have been more mystified than ever.

At six o'clock Mr. Curtis' car ran up to the door and Saito was there to welcome him.

"Ah, Saito, this is like old times. I am glad to see you back again. Was the trip all you anticipated?" he asked as Saito took his overcoat.

"All most fine, augustness. Will the Curtis-Same go ride up to the Okka-san and Yoshi-Ko?"

"Presently Saito. By-the-way, there is an envelope in the pocket of my overcoat, which I wish you would take out and place in my safe in the library. Be careful, Saito, for the papers are valuable."

"Saito put with all great care. Curtis-Sama can go ad Yoshi-Ko."

"Thank you, Saito. Yes, I know I can

trust you to attend to it. You have never failed me yet. Place the papers in the private drawer with the cash box," and Mr. Curtis went upstairs.

The papers to which Mr. Curtis referred were the drawings of a very clever invention for which he was to take out a patent the moment the device, an attachment for one of the rapid firing guns for coast defense, should be completed. The inventor, a young Army officer, had been at work upon it for more than two years, but until the previous autumn had not achieved his object. At last, however, success had crowned his efforts but just as he was about to turn the matter over to Mr. Curtis to have all made fast and secure through the protection of the Patent Law, Hope was ordered to Paris and Mr. Curtis had dropped everything in order to take her there.

As the invention was a very valuable one, and very vital to the service, it was kept a profound secret, and beyond the inventor

himself and some officials holding important positions in the War Department at Washington, none knew of it. At least that was the belief of those most deeply concerned.

Mr. Curtis' sudden departure had been a great disappointment to Lieutenant Stoddard, for having followed the working out of the device from the very beginning, and being a man of unquestionable integrity, Mr. Curtis held a reputation for great discretion and reliability. To place the matter in other hands at that stage of its development seemed most impolitic to the inventor. Consequently he had held the matter in abeyance until Mr. Curtis' return, though each day's delay caused him no little concern. If he could invent so valuable an appliance why could not some one else equally alive to the need of such do likewise, and immediately take out a patent for it? Then the work and thought of years would be practically thrown away. His own saner judgment dictated placing the matter in the hands of Mr. Curtis'

partner, but his ranking officers at Washington urged so strongly against it that it practically took the form of a command. So there the situation stood, while the young inventor fumed and chafed under the enforced delay.

Just as his patience was at the snapping point a cablegram announced Mr. Curtis' speedy return to the United States and all seemed to promise well.

As soon as Mr. Curtis was again in harness, as he called it, Lieutenant Stoddard hastened to his office, and that very morning he had given him the completed drawings and specifications. Mr. Curtis promised to take up the matter at once, but many threads of business had to be caught up **after** his long absence, and, the day had slipped away before he could complete the examination of the drawings.

As the only alternative, he carried them home, intending to spend two or three hours upon them before retiring. More than once,

prior to his departure for Europe he had taken the still incomplete drawings home, and had spent many hours examining them, his interest increasing each time. Upon these occasions he had merely locked them in his desk, as it seemed highly improbable that anyone would molest them or even see them. It was this package which he handed to the trusted Saito, and which the butler carried as bidden to place in Mr. Curtis' safe.

It was midnight when Mr. Curtis finished examining the drawings and weary from a long, exhausting day rose from his chair, stretched his arms above his head in relaxation after three hours' close application to the intricacies and details of the drawings and specifications. He drew a sigh of relief that he had at length come to the end. Then unconsciously speaking aloud, said:

"He is a clever man. This invention is invaluable and will revolutionize the efficiency of coast protection. I must put it through without further delay. Can't take

any chances of some other fellow getting wise to it before we clench it for old Uncle Sam."

Then replacing the papers in the safe he turned the combination and left the library. An hour later he was sound asleep and the house absolutely silent.

Two a. m. had chimed out upon the tall clock in the lower hall when a small figure stole into the hushed library and stealthily drew near to the safe. A moment later the combination had yielded to the manipulations of a pair of slender hands, the drawings and specifications were withdrawn, the safe again closed, the lock clicked back and then the silent figure slipped out of the room as noiselessly as a shadow.

CHAPTER XVI

A LITTLE PENITENT

It was Holy Week. The earlier part of it had been wet and cold, but on this Good Friday morning the sun was shining brightly and the air was soft and balmy. If March had chosen to come roaring in like a lion, she (or shall I say he?) seemed inclined to assume lamb-like characteristics toward the close of the month, and this seventeenth day promised much for the Easter day so close at hand.

It would be an eventful day for the little Daisy Maiden. Her birthday, the day of her confirmation by the Bishop who had also confirmed her mother, and the feast day which often seemed a greater one to her than Christmas day itself, owing to the fact that her own birthday had fallen upon it. She

was full of plans for this one and this lovely morning she sat in her window busily tying up her little Easter offerings, Miss Forrester a willing, interested assistant.

Since the afternoon upon which she had asked to sit in her easy chair, the couch had been but little used, and each day seemed to bring added strength and less fatigue. True, Miss Forrester did not relax her vigilance for a single moment, but breathed more fully as each passing day showed how much Hope was gaining.

Mrs. Curtis was not at home this morning. She had endless activities in connection with many charities, her deepest interests centering in those concerning children, especially those in any way afflicted. So the morning of Good Friday, after the early service ended, was always given over to the children's ward in St. Luke's Hospital, and to a private home for crippled children which she quietly and most unostentatiously maintained. It was called "Hope's Sanctuary," and there many

a hopeless little one learned the meaning of the word "*Hope*," and many a cheerless little life grew cheerful; many deformed or ailing little body grew strong and able to cope with the demands made upon it.

Its little sponsor had never visited her "Sanctuary," but as the days passed by the promise of her doing so in the near future seemed much brighter. And how she longed to go there. She already knew many of the little inmates' voices, for the telephone in her window had its duplicate in the children's sun-parlor and those who were strong enough to do so often talked with her. Then, too, Hope had her own little private charities. Up at the corner of the street was Patrick O'Toole's news-paper stand beneath the Elevated railroad. Patrick had but one leg, but he managed to hobble about on his crutches, and also to make a living for his three grand-children and himself. Not very much of a living it is true, for the eldest grandchild was but thirteen years of age and

had to be housekeeper and "little mother" for two small, rather unruly boys, aged respectively five and seven. Thus far, however, all had gone fairly well, and Hope had kept a watchful eye upon Mary Ann, Patrick Jr., and Mickey. It was an eye by proxy, however, either her mother or big Michael being her almoners.

And the little O'Tooles were included in these Easter plans, just as were the little Colts up at Lake George, for just now some wonderful Easter eggs were being wrapped up and addressed to them: Eggs whose meat was quite unlike that of ordinary meat.

Hope was trying to decide whether Mickey would prefer a green or a pink ribbon upon his egg, when the rattle of a delivery wagon down in the street below, diverted her attention. Not a very loud rattle, it is true, because the street was smoothly asphalted, but rattle enough to be distinctly heard up in Hope's window. Then it ceased as the wagon drew up to the door, and the driver

ran in to deliver the dessert served by the caterer Mrs. Curtis patronized.

Scarcely had he disappeared within the basement door with his ice tub than a horse's neigh, sounded high and clear.

"Oh, Miss Forrester, it is Billy Mazetti calling for his sugar! Please let me give it to him," cried Hope eagerly.

"It is right here, 'ready and a-waiting,' little Lady Bountiful," answered the nurse, taking from the table at hand a little package done up in a Japanese napkin and tied with a yellow ribbon. As the window was low, Hope could lean over and look down to the sidewalk as Miss Forrester raised the sash.

Down below was a splendid big dappled-gray horse, harnessed to the caterer's wagon. His head was turned a trifle sideways, and raised toward Hope's window, as neigh after neigh fluttered through the wide red nostrils.

"Fred's a-coming, little Missie," called a voice from below as the driver re-appeared. "So heave away," and the good-natured

young man, who for four years had driven "Billy," looked up to Hope's window as he smilingly raised his hat to her.

"Fred, this is Billy's Good Friday allowance. An extra lump, please tell him. Now hold your hat and I'll drop it right in." The driver stood in the middle of the sidewalk his arms upraised holding his hat.

Now why was it that in this world of contrary happenings one must needs have popped up just at that moment? But it did, for just as Fred's arms were upraised; just as his whole attention was centered upon catching the little package of sugar; just as Hope dropped that package down, an old gentleman, most immaculate in frock coat, gold-headed cane and silk hat elected to walk beneath the window, blissfully unconscious of what was pending?

The little package of sugar which Billy Mazetti knew would be forthcoming that morning, just as it had come upon hundreds of other mornings, and for which he had

learned to look up to Hope's window and neigh, was dropped at the precise instant at which the dapper old gentleman passed in front of Fred, and it landed — alack! *not* in Fred's hat, but plump upon the top of the old gentleman's shining silk one!

Kismet! Could circumstantial evidence have been clearer? The old gentleman had not been aware of the first act up in the window, but he was fully aware of Fred's peculiar position as he approached him, though at a loss to account for it. Indeed, it would never have occurred to him to try. The one fact which impressed him was the impact upon his cherished head gear, and being an extremely irascible old gentleman, he instantly took the law into his own hands. The next second the gold-headed cane descended upon the luckless Fred as the old gentleman cried:

"You ruffianly villain! How *dare* you assault me in this manner? I'll have the

law upon you! It's an outrage! It's past belief!"

There are situations when words only add fuel to the flame of some people's wrath. This was one of them. No explanation could possibly have pacified the victim of Hope's unlucky aim. Quick to realize this, the luckless Fred apologized, helped Mr. Pepper-pot to smooth out his silk hat and his temper; to restore both to their normal poise, and to start him upon his way. That done he promptly doubled up in fits of laughter to Billy Mazetti's complete bewilderment, for during all this ridiculous side show Billy had kept up a continual bubble of subdued whinneys for his sugar. When Fred had recovered from his convulsions, Billy's Good Friday allowance of four lumps were fed to him. Then Fred sprang upon his wagon, waved a laughing good-by to the two laughing faces in the window and went upon his way.

"Oh, Miss Forrester, wasn't it perfectly

dreadful?" cried Hope, still in spasms of laughter at her mishap. "Poor old gentleman, I wouldn't have had it happen for worlds. And he gave Fred such a drubbing. We shall never hear the last of that caper if Daddy and Raymond learn of it, and it is so ridiculous that I've *got* to tell them."

Then the work of wrapping the Easter parcels was resumed. Half an hour passed and then Mrs. Curtis returned bringing Hope news of the children at the Sanctuary. She was relating an episode of the morning, to which Hope was listening eagerly, when they heard a slight sound in the doorway. Think it must be Miss Forrester who had left the room but a few minutes before, neither glanced up.

Then a little sob fell upon their ears. Both started. In the middle of the floor stood Beatrice, tears pouring from her eyes, sobs almost choking her, the very personification of woe.

Mrs. Curtis turned as white as Hope's

pillows and rose to her feet. Hope was speechless with surprise. The next moment Beatrice had cast herself upon Mrs. Curtis in a perfect passion of tears.

Mrs. Curtis was too entirely a mother not to respond to this. Whatever her own feeling, this little child was certainly in deep, deep distress. Placing her arms about her she said gently:

"Beatrice, my little girl, what is it? Try to control yourself and tell me."

"I-I-I-can't *live* like this any longer. I killed Hope and you-you-hate me and won't let me see her any more, and I can't c-c-an't stand it. I asked Mo-mo-mother to let me come and see Hope on Easter Sunday because it will be her birthday, but-but-she-she-said '*No!*'—just like that—'*No!*' and told me I was the worst child that ever lived, and she-she-di-di-didn't see why she had to be afflicted with such a trial when other people had decent children. That I could *never*, *never*, see Hope or you again. Then I cried

and she shook me, and gave me a push, and I fell over a footstool and cut me here and got all black and blue. See?" and poor, little, misused Beatrice drew up her sleeve to show a bruised little arm, and pointed to an ugly cut upon her forehead. Hope's gasp of dismay that such things could be was eloquent. Mrs. Curtis resumed her seat and drew the sobbing child upon her lap, all resentment forgotten in an ineffable pity. The contrast in the lives of the two children was deeply impressed upon her and its lesson held a deep meaning. Poor little, reckless, undisciplined Beatrice. Was it surprising the child was lawless and ungovernable?

For a few moments Mrs. Curtis did not try to check the sobs. There are times when Nature must find a safety valve.

In the course of a short time the convulsive sobs lessened in violence and the little gypsy head rested quietly upon Mrs. Curtis' shoulder though the arms still tightly clasped her neck. Presently Mrs. Curtis gently disengaged them,

stroked back the disheveled hair and kissed the hot little forehead, as she asked:

"Are you happier now, dear?"

"Yes, a little, though I can never, never be truly happy again unless you forgive me for killing Hope," half sobbed the penitent.

"But don't you see that you did not kill me?" asked Hope, half amused, yet full of pity. "I am more alive than I've ever been and I am getting stronger every day. Am I not, Mother?"

"Is she really?" asked Beatrice skeptically. "You know I've never seen her since—since that day, though I have begged so hard to, but Mother wouldn't let me even come to ask. She said if she wasn't dead yet she would be soon anyway, and nobody would ever forgive me. And she said you and Raymond hated me, and would always hate me," and here more sobs rose to stop the words. Mrs. Curtis felt indignant that so little judgment had been shown in dealing with this impetuous little being.

"Dear, listen to me," she said, "you can see for yourself that Hope is really much stronger and better. Now we will sit here together and talk it all over quietly, for perhaps I have need to ask your forgiveness as well as you to ask mine. I have felt very harshly toward you, little girl, and I am very sorry I permitted myself to do so. I should have tried to understand. But now we will have a quiet little talk and set all straight. Sit here between Hope and me and take her hand in yours. Then you will understand that she is really better and stronger."

Beatrice cuddled down upon the hassock at Mrs. Curtis' feet and Hope took the small hand in both her own.

For half an hour Mrs. Curtis talked as only Mrs. Curtis could. Quietly, gently, seriously, Beatrice's great eager eyes never left hers, and no word was missed.

"And do you now understand, dear, that what we felt to be such a terrible calamity at the time may have been God's way of bringing

about much better things, and He chose you as his instrument?"

"Me? God made me see that owl and holler right out so Hope could be pitched out on that rock and most killed? Oh, He couldn't! He wouldn't!"

"Dr. ————— said Hope could never be well unless she received some severe shock, dear. You may not be able to understand this now, but I think you will some day. And how could *we* know what it must be, or how brought about? And even had we known could we have deliberately caused it? That would have been too hard. So He chose His own way, and used you. For a long, long time it made us feel very harshly toward you, for we were like little children ourselves and couldn't understand, Mr. Curtis and I, though Hope has never ceased to love you, and has more than once asked to see you. She also asked me to forgive you. Perhaps if you had not come here today I should still be unyielding. I am glad you came, because

I think we need each other's forgiveness and to begin all anew for the dear Easter Day. This is our atonement?"

As Mrs. Curtis ceased speaking Beatrice scrambled to her feet to again clasp her arms about her.

"Then you *do* forgive me? You *do*; you will let me come to see you and Hope? I love you both so hard."

"Yes, you may come, dear, but try to be very gentle when you are with Hope, you know she is not like you."

"I will! I will! And I want to kiss her and be friends forever and ever. May I?"

For answer Hope held out her arms and poor little Beatrice nestled into them with a degree of gentleness rarely seen in the little madcap's motions.

CHAPTER XVII

EASTER

“O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that, through Thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.”

How graciously the sunlight poured through the western window of Ruhevoll as those words were spoken, flooding the beautiful room with its light, and falling upon the child reclining upon her silken draped couch. What a picture that room presented that Easter-even. Perhaps its parallel could not have been

found in the whole great city; possibly not in the whole wide world.

Always the retreat of peace, tranquility and harmony, as its name implied, today it was the sanctuary of Charity, Hope and Divine Trust. For this day's Sacrament it had been transformed into a chapel.

Banking the fireplace were pots of tall Easter lilies arranged to form an altar, in front of which stood a white-draped table. On every side were pots or jardenieres of lilies, spirea, hyacinths, roses, all of purest white, as were all the draperies in the room.

Hope's couch stood in front of the table, its cover and cushions of the softest, purest white china silk, as was the gown she wore. The only touch of color was her own golden-bronze hair falling in rich, burnished ringlets upon her cushions.

By the table stood Bishop Pendleton in his vestments, his face a benediction as he spoke the concluding words of the service, held in Ruhevoll because it had been impos-

sible for Hope to attend the confirmation service in St. Stephen's at three o'clock.

Near at hand were Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, Miss Forrester, Miss Woodward, Lizette, and, strange incompatibility, *Saito*.

Mr. and Mrs. Curtis had not intended that any others should be present but at the last moment Hope had said:

"Mother, may I have with me those I love best?"

"Others besides Father and myself, darling?" asked Mrs. Curtis in surprise.

"Yes, I would like to have Miss Forrester, Miss Woodward, Lizette and *Saito*."

"*Saito!*" echoed Mrs. Curtis, striving to conceal her amazement at this surprising request.

"Yes, because I love them so dearly and they have been so devoted to me. Just think how long Miss Forrester and Miss Woodward have taken care of me, and *Saito* has been so good. I am very fond of him, Mother."

"Yes dear, I know you are fond of him, but——" and Mrs. Curtis hesitated. The presence of this man seemed so incompatible with the occasion, and the ritual.

"You think he will not understand, Mother? He may not, but he knows it all concerns me, and that will mean everything to him, I know."

Consequently Saito was present, and during the entire ceremony his expression was absolutely inscrutable.

The beautiful service ended with the hymn:

"I have no help but Thine; nor
do I need

Another arm save Thine to lean
upon;

It is enough, my Lord, enough
indeed;

My strength is in Thy might,
Thy might alone."

sung by St. Stephen's choir boys who had come to sing for the little invalid. They

stood in the broad lower hall, Mr. Sands, St. Stephen's organist and choir-master, at the piano which had been moved close to the music room door in order that Hope might hear distinctly.

A few moments after the service ended Saito and Lizette slipped away. Miss Forrester and Miss Woodward after speaking some words of endearment to Hope retired to their rooms, and the good Bishop said farewell. Then Mrs. Curtis asked:

"Shall Father and I sit with you for a little while, dear?"

Mr. Curtis bent to stroke the golden curls. Somehow, words would not come to his lips, and his eyes were troublesome.

"Mother, will you mind if I ask to be left alone for a little time? I don't feel like talking just now, but I have so much to think about. So much. If you will roll my couch into the window, and draw the green shades a little to soften the light, I think I shall just lie here and think and rest. I am

a little bit tired, Mother, dear. Shall you mind?"

For reply Mrs. Curtis bent and kissed the lovely face smiling up at her but only said:

"Mother's precious daughter, it shall be as you wish."

Mr. Curtis rolled the couch into the window as Mrs. Curtis lowered the shades. Then bending over gathered his treasure into his arms. Hope nestled to him, but neither spoke. There was no need of words. With more than one backward glance at the little form upon the couch in its flower embowered window, they left the room. Perhaps such another hour could never again come into their lives.

How silent, how peaceful was the room in which lay the little girl who had within that hour taken her first communion. In her own window the light was softened by the lowered shades, but through the soft hangings of the western casement the rays of the setting sun fell aslant. Through the closed windows,

for this Easter day fell too early in the season to admit of raised sashes, the vesper chimes of St. Stephen's called all to evensong. Presently the subdued strains of the great organ and the eventide anthem fell soothingly upon Hope's ears. Was it the result of the day's excitement, or the tranquilizing influence of the hour which caused her to drift away, and away into a world of unreality? When the pure, lovely spirit seemed released from the body which had known so much pain and suffering.

Who shall answer that question? Perhaps all conditions combined to bring about the result. Hope never knew, nor did she ever question. She was only conscious that after lying quietly upon her couch for a time, her thoughts dwelling upon the beautiful experiences of the past hour, her heart was filled with the deepest, tenderest emotions, her soul with reverential awe. She forgot the real world around her, forgot her physical disability, and seemed, as she lay there, to

grow stronger and vigorous, as other children.

There was no continuity of thought; it was just a succession of mental pictures and impressions, in which the strains of,

“The soft summer breeze plays around me,
The birds trill their eventide song,”

from St. Stephen's emphasized the enchantment of the hour.

Gradually the eyelids fell lower and lower, the breathing grew softer, quieter, more regular, and Hope slept. Gently, monotonously the moments were ticked away by the pretty clock upon the mantel. Fifty-three was intoned by its cathedral chimes. Not a sound disturbed the silence of the house, for Mrs. Curtis had asked Miss Forrester to see that none approached Ruhevoll until Hope's little bell tinkled its summons.

As her eyelids drooped lower and lower, Hope's eyes had rested upon the picture above her couch, where the figure of the Christ seemed to smile upon her. Then a soft radiance

filled the room and He seemed to move toward her. The wonderful light fell all about her, exerting a strange, exhilarating influence, imbuing her with new life, renewed strength. Then a gentle voice seemed to call:

"Hope," she answered: "Yes," and rose to a sitting position, one hand resting upon her pillows, the other held forth as though expecting it to be taken.

And in this strange vision that shining figure seemed to stand beside her couch, and gently clasp in His own the hand she held toward him as he again called her by name, and smiled as her name fell from his lips, and oh, the tenderness, the pity, the sweetness of that smile.

"Is it the promise?" she asked with an answering smile.

The beautiful head inclined "Yes." The gentle eyes were fixed upon hers.

"How soon? O how soon?" was her eager whisper.

"Within the time of thy desire. Thy

name shall be realized. Thy faith also. Charity thou already knowest. It is the greatest of the three."

For a moment his hand rested upon her head, then his gentle voice breathed, "Peace," as he receded toward the sunlit window, the white raiment which fell about him seeming to mingle with the luminous background, until all outline faded and the shining figure was lost in the glory of the sun's declining rays.

"Come back, oh, come back!" begged Hope, holding forth both hands in supplication, as with a start she wakened to find herself standing beside her couch, her arms outstretched.

For one thrilling moment she stood there hardly knowing whether she were awake, or still dreaming. Then as she realized the truth, she uttered a little stifled cry and fell back upon her couch weak and trembling. Without aid, without even voluntary impulse she had risen from that couch and stood

alone. It was the thrilling ecstasy of the little child who first discovers its power to stand unaided, but the emotion was intensified a thousand fold. She did not hear a stifled cry at her door, nor rapidly receding, though light footfalls.

Covering her face with both hands she murmured:

“What *was* it? Oh, *what was* it? A dream? A vision? Could a dream be so real?”

She looked toward the picture hanging above her bed. Yes, it was the same gentle, tender pitying face she had seen beside her but a moment before. The same attitude of benediction. “And he said: ‘Within the time of thy desire.’ Oh, Raymond, dear, dear brother, to be strong enough to see you graduate! To see the diploma placed in your hands! To know that you are to serve the dear flag as *you* will surely serve it, for God and Country. *That, that* is the time of my desire.” A little sob ended the words and Hope buried her face in her pil-

low. Not for a thousand worlds would she have that sound reach beyond the walls of Ruhevoll. This was a day of Faith, Hope and Charity. Of peace and promise. The sobs ceased. An inexpressible sense of peace and content encompassed her. Then with a soft sigh the words "In the time of thy desire" were softly repeated, and sleep, deep and refreshing brought oblivion.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHY SAITO FAILED

More a than month had passed since that Easter Day which held such wondrous experiences for Hope. Strangely enough she had not spoken of them to anyone. Again and again she had been upon the point of speaking to her mother, but when the moment came to do so she seemed tongue-tied.

What *was* the reason she could not confide in the one she loved best and trusted most implicitly? The little girl reproached herself bitterly in secret, but still this unaccountable reticence bound her.

And so the weeks slipped by, Hope gaining in strength and cheeriness with each succeeding day.

Then one morning Dr. ———— paid his usual weekly visit, bringing with him in his

motor car something which caused not only Hope's heart to bound for joy, but drew from Mrs. Curtis' lips a little cry, as she clasped her hands at sight of the objects which Saito carried:

. A pair of crutches.

Could it be possible? Was the hip sufficiently normal, the back strong enough for Hope to venture upon crutches?

Saito's hands were trembling and he was strangely agitated as he stood the crutches near Hope's chair, Dr. ————— meanwhile nodding like a Chinese mandarin, and rubbing his hands together, a broad, satisfied smile upon his kind face.

"Now little Daisy Maiden we shall see! We shall see!" he cried, seating himself beside her and taking her hand in both his own.

"I've brought you Mr. Jig and Mr. Jog and I expect you to become inseparable companions until some other young lady needs their companionship more than you do. I've an idea that before very long you

will have none of them, and will be sending *me* to the right-about as well, in spite of our eight-years' friendship."

"Oh, Dr. —————, am I truly, truly to try to walk on crutches? When may I? And may I use them down-stairs and out doors and everywhere?" cried Hope, the words fairly pouring from her lips.

"Hoity, Toity, Miss! Is this the way you try to break bounds at the very first hint of liberty? Miss Forrester, come here. Pay heed: Two minutes today, three minutes tomorrow—if she behaves herself—four minutes the next day."

"But now, Dr. —————. May I try right now? Please, please let me," begged Hope.

"What do you say, Mrs. Curtis? Shall I start her off with Mr. Jig and Mr. Jog, while I'm upon the scene to keep her from attempting any wild prancings?"

"I am quite as eager as Hope, Dr. —————," was Mrs. Curtis' reply.

"Well, I dare say I shall not have a moment's peace until you are launched upon your four-legged journey. So now for it."

With Miss Forrester upon one side, and Miss Woodward upon the other, Hope was assisted upon the crutches. The first essay at using them was an awkward one, but presently she learned "the little trick," as she called it, and bumped her way across the room. After a moment's rest she came back, the return journey being much more quickly and easily accomplished.

This was the beginning of Hope's little journeys in the world: A world with a very limited horizon it is true, for the walls of her home still bounded it, save for short drives along the Hudson in the motor car, or mornings spent out of doors in the secluded side garden, now "all a-blowing and a-growing" with spring flowers. There in her leafy bower during the late April days Hope could rest in her big East India reclining chair,

or make little excursions upon her crutches along the smooth concrete paths.

How often had Mr. Curtis congratulated himself upon his forethought in having retained those twenty by one-hundred feet of land, for, surely, none of equal proportions in all the great city could be more valuable in the returns they yielded in happiness or revivifying powers.

After their return from abroad, when Hope seemed to be gaining steadily and the prospect of health and strength was more promising, Mr. Curtis had installed an electric elevator in his home, thus making it possible for the little girl to change from floor to floor at will and find diversion in new scenes, even if only from one room to another. What even such a slight change means to an invalid who for years has been confined to one floor, only those who have experienced such confinement can appreciate. To Hope it held a thousand exciting diversions.

The elevator, a smooth-running electric

one, was operated by buttons which started or stopped it at will. The delight of Hope's life was to be allowed to press the starting and stopping buttons, and her happy laugh at the response invariably brought a sympathetic smile to Miss Forrester's lips, who often said:

"You take as much delight in your elevator, dear, as Raymond took in his car while up at the Lake. He fairly thrilled when he held the steering wheel, and I believe you do the same as your fingers press those buttons."

"Of course, I do!" cried Hope. "There is something about it which gives one such a sense of power. Just a little push,—and away I go,—up or down,—as I choose. Then another, and I stop. And all done by such a tiny electric spark. Oh, I *wish* I had been a boy instead of a girl. I know I could have invented something wonderful. Why, Miss Forrester, sometimes I dream I am in that elevator, only it isn't just an elevator in our

house; it is right out-doors and carrying me up, up, into the most wonderful places you can imagine where I can look down and see everything happening in the world."

"You are surely an imaginative little being. But don't let your imagination carry you right away from us some day. Keep on this side of the borderland of reality, honey, for we can't get along without you," laughed Miss Forrester.

"O I'm not going to fly away in my elevator. You need not worry about that, because the roof is a very strong one indeed, you know. But I *do* like to feel things respond to my will. Perhaps I get my love of such things from Daddy. I am sure he would have been an inventor if he had not been a patent lawyer; he is never satisfied until he understands every little thing about the inventions for which he secures patents, you know. Why I heard him tell mother only a few days ago that he was determined to understand all about one of the most

wonderful inventions which has ever come under his notice, and for which he has just applied for a patent. Mother was begging him not to wear himself out over it. He has been sitting up until all hours of the night pouring over some papers which describe it, and she says he will be ill if he works both day and night. But it must be so splendid to have such brains."

This conversation took place one evening as Miss Forrester was settling Hope for the night. When all was arranged and her charge had smuggled down upon her pillow waiting for Mrs. Curtis to come in for the good-night caress, Miss Forrester said:

"Now please forget your beloved elevator and everything else and journey straight to the land o' Nod. That is the best place for a young lady who has made three trips in her elevator in one day, pranced all over a garden upon four legs instead of two, and talked like a run-away phonograph for the past hour.

An hour later no sound but Hope's gentle breathing was audible in Ruhevoll as the rosy light of the Fairy Lamp cast strange shadows upon the walls, and beyond in the sitting-room the little clock softly chimed the quarter hours.

Since Hope's condition had so materially improved Miss Forrester had slept in her own room which adjoined Hope's. Miss Woodward's was next, all rooms communicating, thus insuring ceaseless watchfulness over the invalid.

The little clock had chimed, oh, ever so softly two a. m., the tones musical as distant monastery bells. Not a sound was to be heard in Ruhevoll. Miss Forrester and Miss Woodward, with no thought of any untoward happenings, slept peacefully in their rooms. Lizette in her little room at the end of the corridor heard not a hint of a sound. On the floor below Mr. and Mrs. Curtis had long since retired to their rooms, and on the

main floor of the house all was dark and silent. All?

No. In the library the shaded desk light was so turned that it cast a small circle of light upon Mr. Curtis' desk which was open, and outspread upon it was a paper covered with intricate drawings, and minutely written specifications. Over this paper bent Saito, carefully tracing upon impression paper every line either written or drawn, visible through its transparency. How carefully, how skillfully the long, slender fingers worked. How accurately every detail was copied. There must be no possible error in *this* piece of work. More than one night had been required to make this copy of the great invention which Mr. Curtis was about to have patented for the inventor, and which would make Lieutenant Stoddard famous, for no brain had heretofore thought of such a device, yet when it was given to the world of ordnance, Army and Naval Officers would wonder *why* so simple a thing had not been thought

of long before. Yet none must know of it until the patent was secured safe and sound for Uncle Sam's exclusive use. If it should become known to other countries its value would be gone, for then they too would be in possession of as valuable a discovery as the United States, and, in case of war, could play tit for tat.

No, it must be kept a secret and for months Mr. Curtis had carefully guarded it. These papers had never been in the hands of another living soul, but the inventor's and his own, and he had become intensely interested in the development of the invention. Each night he had brought the papers home from his office, and spent many hours poring over them, invariably locking them in his library safe upon retiring.

Yet with all his care and precautions, here they lay upon his *open* desk, *the safe door also open*, and Saito, the trusted, was copying every line of them, while those who trusted

him so implicitly slept above stairs. What did it all mean?

How rapidly the deft fingers worked. The task was nearly done. Only the most intricate portions, those most vital to its success, remained to be traced upon the impression paper. Another half-hour's work and it would be completed. Then what will Saito do with it? Ah, *that* is the vital question.

Out in the broad hall the big clock intoned two full, deep chimes, followed by two softer, quicker ones. Two-thirty. As the sounds died away there was the faintest suggestion of a sound. Saito was too absorbed in his task to notice it. It was only a little click, anyway. A door-lock, temporarily caught, but springing back into place, might have caused it. One often hears strange creakings and snappings in the silent hours of the night. But there followed another faint sound; the almost indescribable one of light silken garments brushing against something. On it came, straight toward the dark library, and

in the doorway, ever so faintly outlined against the deep green hangings stood a little figure with head upraised in a listening attitude, hands outstretched before her, as though to clasp another's, an expectant smile curving the lovely lips. The eyes were wide open but though looking straight ahead evidently conveyed to her brain no knowledge of her surroundings.

Hope was in the land of dreams, her body involuntarily obeying the sub-conscious dictates of her brain. In her sleep she was doing what in her waking hours no one would believe possible. The crutches are beside her bed upstairs, yet, if slow and cautious, there was no hesitancy in her steps as she moved slowly but steadily toward her father's desk, at which Saito worked.

The light falling full upon the white paper cast a soft radiance from it, which made objects a few feet from the desk visible and into this circle Hope, in her white silken negligee, her curls falling all about her,

stepped without a sound. Then a little sigh breathed from the lips. Only a breath, but had the gun for the coast defense over the drawings of which Saito had been pouring for two hours, suddenly become the object itself and fired a shot then and there, the effect upon the little Japanese could hardly have been more overwhelming. He turned suddenly, saw the little figure standing before him, uttered just one word "Hinohime!" and fell prone at Hope's feet.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SPIRIT OF HINOHIME

We must turn time backward for an hour. To the moment when Hope began to live in her strange dream world in which all the happenings of the day, fragments of conversation, the things which she had seen with waking eyes, the words which she had spoken with conscious thought, were jumbled, as things invariably manage to jumble themselves in our dreams. But most dominant of all were Miss Forrester's words. "Don't let your imagination carry you right away from us."

Somehow she was possessed of an uncontrollable desire to *be* carried away, and the elevator seemed to be the one and only means of carrying her. If she could only reach it without anyone's knowledge, and press those fascinating buttons, surely she could fly away

up, up, up, as she had so often dreamed of doing, and in spite of the roof, float off far above the world. How many, many times she had dreamed that she was gliding along just a few feet above the ground, moving thither and yonder at will, almost without effort, and moving oh, so easily and delightfully, wherever she chose to go, but always returning to dear Ruhevoll. No crutches were needed in those dream-journeys. No wheeled chairs,—no help.

Real and more real became the dream, until without the slightest sound she arose to a sitting position, then—and whence this miracle of strength? She slipped from her bed, thrust her feet into the soft white wool slippers which were always beside it, drew over her night dress the little silken negligee which lay upon a chair at hand, and stood straight up. Then silently as a spirit she made her way out into the hall and a moment later was in her elevator, her finger pressing the button. She had meant to go up, but some irresistible

impulse led her finger to the button labeled M. F., and the noiseless car descended to the main floor, and stopped. The lock clicked and the door slid back, and Hope glided into the hall. Yes, she would like to go through those rooms before she took her flight up, up, up, as she meant to do, far away beyond the real world, and away and away into that mysterious dream world with which she was so familiar, but which no one else seemed to understand: A strange, beautiful world in which she went and came at will, free from all pain, strong, vigorous and never weary.

But first she would go into the library, the room she dearly loved, and in which of late, since the elevator had made one floor as accessible as another, she had spent so many happy hours, cuddled in the big cushioned chair beside "Daddy", as he read aloud to her. Hope glided into the hall, across it and into the library, elated and happy in her beautiful dream. Then suddenly the dream changed. It was no longer the library, but one of the

strange Japanese temples of which Saito had so often told her, and shown her wonderful pictures, and Saito himself was here bowing before one of the curious shrines, a shrine which seemed to strangely resemble her father's desk. Oh, it was most confusing.

Then came the sharp cry of:

"Hinohime!" and Hope awakened to find Saito prone before her.

It is said that a sudden awakening sometimes proves fatal to somnambulists. Why it did not so prove to Hope only the Great Power which guided the little girl knows.

With a faint cry she stood as though petrified, her hands still outstretched over Saito. Then the force and will of the generations preceding her sprung to meet the test, and Hope recovered herself, recognized her surroundings and the form at her feet.

She did not sway or tremble, but said quite steadily:

"Saito, have I frightened you? I have walked in my sleep. I did not know I *could*

walk without my crutches. Perhaps I shall not be able to now I am wide awake. Get up please, and take my hand."

Perfectly simple, matter-of-fact words, yet apparently unintelligible to the man who continued to murmur "Hinohime, Hinohime," and other words in his own tongue.

"Saito!" the command was more peremptory. "Are you too startled to hear what I am saying? I need your help."

Then habit conquered. Saito rose to his knees, his hands clasped in supplication though terror and incredulity still filled his eyes.

Hope smiled.

"I did not think I could play ghost so well, Saito. I am really Hope. See? Take my hand and lead me to a chair."

Without a word Saito rose and did as bidden. Hope stepped toward her father's chair, that one being nearest. And then her eyes fell upon the papers spread upon his desk. For a moment the significance of it all failed to

impress her. Then, in a flash, came the revelation: The papers which her father had so guarded, which held the secret of the great invention of which he alone had the knowledge and which had been intrusted to his care, were lying there upon his desk. What did it all mean? Saito had not spoken one word.

Just then the hall clock chimed, two—three. Hope started. Was that the hour? Turning her great brown eyes upon Saito she said:

“Saito, what are father’s papers doing here, and why are you here at this hour of the night? I cannot understand it. Did he forget to put them away, and are you doing so for him? You are always so thoughtful for us.”

A strange change passed over Saito’s face. Then he looked at her as though he were endeavoring to discover whether she were speaking frankly, or her words held a double meaning? Hope continued to look at him with that steady, questioning gaze. He seemed to have become dumb.

She laid her hand upon his arm, saying:

"Saito, I am sorry I startled you so. I was terribly frightened when I first woke up and found myself here, but as soon as I was *wide* awake and saw you I knew I was safe. You have always taken care of me, and you once saved my life, you know. That is why Daddy and Mother love you. But I am sure he would feel terribly distressed to know he had forgotten to put away these papers. I can't think how he came to do so. Was he called away from his desk? Let us lock them in it, and then please help me upstairs. I must get back to my room before they miss me. It would terrify them so, and Mother would be so worried."

She had turned to gather up the papers when her eyes fell upon the tracing paper duplicates, with the Japanese characters traced upon their margins, and, child that she was, a strange quiver of apprehension passed over her; her first intuition that there must be something more to all this than she had

at first understood. And Saito's silence was most incomprehensible of all. Not a word had passed his lips since he rose to his feet.

"Saito, speak to me," commanded Hope, trembling slightly.

Then Saito spoke. Not in his strange broken dialect, and almost incomprehensible English, which she had always heard from his lips; the odd phraseology and pronunciation of the Japanese lower classes who pick up English from the foreign visitors to their land, but the clear, correct English of the highly educated Japanese gentleman. And yet, through all the rush of words which followed, ran his lingering faith in his own religion; the belief in the faith of his forefathers.

"Yes. Yes, I will speak. It is so ordered by the gods. When I came, long ago, I believed the gods had sent *you* here to guard and help me to perform my duty. To help me carry out the orders of my superiors. Never mind who they are; that does not mat-

ter. I believed you to be the spirit of Hinohime, our Princess of the Sun, who, at will, may take any form in order to aid mortals. It may still be so. I do not know. When you glided in upon me just now I was sure, but you are of the West and can not understand. I am of the East. I was ordered to your father's house to watch, to wait for months, if necessary, but to *succeed* at last. That you can understand, though you are a child. In Japan you would be considered almost a woman. I was ordered to watch, yes, watch closely, and to learn all I could about this great invention; to tell, or write of it to one high in power in Japan. For this I would receive great honor. I came. I found you, my Hinohime. You told me many things,—strange, strange, things,—which have come true. The cardinal bird came to your window with the message. You said it was merely a bird. I believe it to have been the spirit of our great god Shaka, and I looked upon you as he spoke to you, but you did not

know it. Again I looked upon you when you rose from your couch last Easter day. Nor were you aware of that either. What vision came then? That I cannot tell. Was it my god Shaka, or your Christ who worked that wonderful miracle and is still working? You have grown steadily stronger, and tonight you walk unaided. You have walked into my presence at the critical moment. I have nearly accomplished the work for which I have waited patiently, and played my part for months. Have you come to bid me complete it? Are you here as my guardian spirit, who aids my endeavors to serve Japan? Are you, indeed, the spirit of Hinohime, sent by my gods to aid me? Or are you the human child whom all here believe you to be? And if so, why are you guided to me in your sleep?"

Saito paused. Hope had followed every word. Was this part of the strange thought medley which had been running so madly through her brain ever since she laid her head upon her pillow? A little shudder passed

over her. Saito caught up an afghan from a couch close at hand and laid it about her shoulders, his self-possession again restored.

"I am not cold, Saito, but I don't quite understand yet. You were copying father's papers?"

"I was. I had nearly completed the work. Another hour and the copy would have been mailed to my chief at Washington."

"And what then?"

"My government would also be in possession of this great discovery, and could make use of it in case of war with another country."

"But it would not be *theirs* to make use of. They would have no right to do so. An American officer made this great discovery, after months and years of thought and work. He has placed it in my father's hands to be patented. It belongs to *him* and to his country. No one else has any right to use what his brains have thought out and planned. And the invention is in my father's charge. He would be dishonored if through his care-

lessness it fell into other hands. Do you understand this, Saito?"

Saito shrugged his shoulders and made an odd little flutter with his hands. Then he said:

"The honor will go to the one who is cleverest. If *I* succeed and he fails, the honor from my own country comes to *me*. I shall be advanced, exalted."

A swift change passed over Hope's face.

"And is *this* your idea of honor? *I* should call it dishonor. Yes, disgrace. To steal something which belongs to another; to get possession of it by trickery. Is *this* why you have been so devoted to me? Is *this* why you have lived in our home and served us as our butler? Only to bring disgrace to those who have trusted you, and loved you because you have been so kind to me? And I have thought you loved me and served me because I was ill and helpless." She paused and shrank away from him. He clasped his hands and

took one step toward her. Her raised hand stayed him.

"No. Stop, please. I am only a child, and perhaps I do not understand as I should, but I have loved and trusted you, Saito. I would not have believed, or understood all this if some one had told me of it. You were so good, so good to me always. Always so thoughtful in every way. You have done so much to make me happy. And then, up at the lake, you were the first to come to my rescue, and now I must lose all faith in you, I don't know how to think of you in that way.

O it hurts me so! It hurts me terribly, for I can not bear to distrust those I've learned to love," and laying her arms upon her father's desk Hope dropped her face upon them and burst into tears.

Perhaps nothing she could have done would have so moved Saito. During the three years he had spent in America he had imbibed enough of American ideas, and the American view-point, to realize what such an outbreak

meant to an American child, and especially such a child as Hope, to whom tears were almost unknown; who was sheltered from every pain, protected from every sorrow, or disappointment if such protection lay within the power of those who loved and cared for her so tenderly. From the moment he had entered her home this had been impressed upon him in a thousand ways. Even Michael would have submitted to tortures rather than cause the little Daisy Maiden a moment's unhappiness. And now he, Saito, who had grown to love this little girl with a love bordering upon a superstitious worship, had reduced her to tears. What a conflict raged in his half Oriental, half Anglicized mind. One instant she was the little daughter of the house, from whom he had ever known the utmost consideration, the sweetest courtesy. Who had shown her affection for her father's servant in a hundred ways. Then came the old Oriental faith in his gods and their limitless power. The mercy of the Sun Goddess. Her

protection of the elect, and he dropped upon his knees, his hands raised in supplication, but his head bowed as he murmured:

“Command me. I await thy word, but my heart is torn asunder.”

CHAPTER XX

THE PROMISE IS FULFILLED

Hope raised her head, drew her hands across her eyes and looked at him as though she hardly comprehended his words. Then she said:

“Saito, I fear this is all too serious, too important a matter for *me* to decide, for I cannot understand it all. Part of it I can understand, of course, but what ought to be done I hardly know. I am so bewildered, I only know that what you have been trying to do, what you have nearly succeeded in doing, must *not* be done. Yet how can I prevent you from completing it if you wish to? You believe you are doing right when you so serve your country, and send these papers to your government. I have been taught to despise a lie, whether spoken or acted, and this is far

worse than a lie; it is stealing something which belongs to someone else. The fact that father forgot and left the papers on his desk should make no difference. That is not *our* idea of honor. I cannot understand how he came to forget—”

“He did not forget,” breathed Saito.

“Then how came they there?” asked Hope in amazement.

For answer Saito went to the safe gave the lock several deft turns until it clicked into place, turned the knob and opened the safe, a strange smile upon his face until he caught the look of horror upon Hope’s.

“Did my father give you that combination, Saito?” she asked in a strange, calm voice, her eyes never for a moment leaving his.

“Yes, long ago. When you went abroad. I had charge of all his accounts, and he kept much of value in this safe.”

“And now you have used his confidence in you to work his dishonor? He trusted you, and you have betrayed his trust? Saito, you

could hardly have asked anything of my father which he would not have gladly granted, so deep is his gratitude for what you have done for me, and because he knows how fond I have been of you."

"*Have been.* Yes. It is over, and I, too, have worshiped. Was it Hinohime or the Daisy Maiden?" interrupted Saito. "Perhaps both. But can affection and duty ever walk side by side? If I give all to you shall I serve my country? And those?" he pointed to the papers upon the desk. "If I give it up, all, all, and say I have failed, may I still claim the love, the respect? May I serve ever and always? In Japan there was once a little sister, fair, sweet, sunny like you—yes, do not be surprised—my mother became the wife of an English gentleman after my father's death,—Oh, we are of the high caste; he was of noble birth, a nobleman in his own land. I was to her age what your brother's is to yours. She came when I was almost a man. We called her Etsu,—our

Delight—and she was beautiful as the summer sunrise; as fair as the lily; as pure as the snow. Business called her father home to England when she was nine years of age. There he fell ill and died. That year his people sent for our Etsu-Ko. It was her father's will they said. If so she must go. Japanese wives and daughters never question. She went, her heart breaking. Our mother's did break, and she is now sleeping near the Shrine of Kwannon. Etsu lives in England. I have never seen her since the day she sailed from Japan,—the little sister I loved. She is now fourteen years of age. In Japan we would think her a woman. In England, or here, she is thought a child. My heart is heavy for the sound of her voice, yet I may not see or know her. So her father's people will. *You* have her hair, her eyes, her pretty ways. You gave me kindness and affection when my heart was sore and hungry. I would gladly have given my life in return. If you command it, I shall now give my

honor," and turning quickly he caught up the papers from the desk and held them toward her, adding: "Here is the work of months. If I hand these to my chief at Washington my reward will be a title, which will make me, Saito Togashi, the equal of Etsu Chicheley. *Then* I shall go to England and claim my sister!"

The words ended with a proud ring, but the next instant Saito Togashi dropped upon a chair and buried his face upon his arms, as only a moment before Hope had done.

She leaned forward and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Saito, listen to me. You are wrong. You cannot win Etsu by winning a title in this way. All the titles in the world without truth and honor, real truth and honor, I mean, the honor *my* Christ taught, the truth He lived, doing to others as we would have them do unto us, would mean nothing in *our* world, the world your *sister* lives in now. Her people would despise you if they learned

of it. All who know you here would do the same. Father and mother would pity you, yes, but you could hold no place in their esteem. You say you are well born, a gentleman in your own country? Be one in ours also. Be Raymond's equal. Our friend. I have this copy. If others knew of it you would be nothing, nothing ever again. You can say you have failed. That will be true, for, see—I shall destroy these—for Etsu's sake, for Etsu's honor," and rising Hope took a few steps to the fireplace, and laid the thin sheets upon the smouldering logs. In an instant they flamed into a blaze, curled, blackened and floated away up the chimney. The work and scheming of weeks was gone in ashes.

"But your father, you must tell him?" cried Saito in a hushed voice.

"Gather up *his* papers, Saito, and put them into the safe. Father has never doubted you. He never shall if I can help it. Remember it is for the little sister, Etsu."

The smile was so full of pity.

A moment later the papers were securely fastened in the safe. Then Saito dropped upon one knee, lifted the edge of Hope's garment to his lips and said:

"I am at sea without a compass. I know not which of the gods has ordered this: The gods of my fathers', or the one you worship. But this I know: In you I have found the Spirit of Hinohime: Our merciful princess of the Sun. I have failed in my undertaking to serve my country. Perhaps my gods have so ordered it for me. I cannot understand. I only know that what you have just said now seems right to me. If this is the message of the Christ you love, and in whom you trust, He has chosen his time and way to send it to me, and I obey. In a few days I must go away. We may never meet again, but I shall never, never forget. This night I have seen a miracle, whether of your gods, or mine, I know not, but of this I am sure: When I go to claim Etsu it shall be by *your* code of honor.

May all the gods guard you, my Hinohime. Come."

Tenderly he led her back to the elevator, silently ran the car up to Ruhevoll, and guided her to her door. Hope passed into her room as noiselessly as she had fled from it. Saito slipped back to the elevator and descended to the lower floor without a sound.

Placing her negligee and slippers as they had been left Hope dropped upon her bed, drew the covers about her, and with a little shuddering sigh pressed her hands to her eyes.

Had the past hour been real? Or was it all a dream? No, it was no dream and the little cathedral clock had struck five ere her eyes closed in sleep. It was long past nine before she opened them and found her mother smiling beside her.

"Well, little sleepy-head, I began to think you would not waken till luncheon. What a wonderful restful sleep it has been."

For a moment Hope seemed too dazed

to answer. Then the events of the night returned to her with a rush and she cried:

“Mother! Mother! Was it a dream, or *did* I walk?”

Mrs. Curtis changed color. What was this? But Hope hurried on.

“No, no, it was *not* a dream. I know it was true. Oh, please let me try again. I *did* get up; I am sure I got *up*, and I want to try again.”

Mrs. Curtis was disturbed. Was Hope feverish, or had some strange change really taken place during the night? Stooping she laid her hand upon the little girl's forehead. It was cool and moist, and the eyes looking into her own were clear and calm as deep pools. The lips were smiling happily.

“Have I frightened you, Mumsey, dear? Please don't let me. I am perfectly all right and as happy as happy can be because I *know* I am going to walk today.”

Though secretly much concerned Mrs. Curtis gave no outward sign. Hope had so

often said such unusual things that Mrs. Curtis sometimes wondered whether some strange influence dominated her. Whether her highly sensitive nervous organization could feel and almost foretell events. The child had always insisted that before Raymond's day of graduation she would walk unaided, and had always stated that fact so simply and confidently, as though it were a matter of course, and quite beyond argument. And now the date of Raymond's graduation was but a few weeks off. Already Mr. Curtis had quietly made arrangements to spend two weeks in Annapolis, and had rented a furnished house near the Naval Academy; the home of a retired Admiral, who was only too glad to escape the rush and confusion invariably incident to graduation week at the Academy. As yet Hope had not been told of this, lest failure of strength at the last moment might make such a trip impossible. In that event, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis would go to Annapolis for a day or two only, for, much as

they felt due the little girl, something was also due their only son upon the day he would receive his commission as an Ensign in the United States Navy, this being the first class ever graduated with that honor. In a few days Hope would be told of the plans.

And now this strange exhilaration and certainty of recovery. Mrs. Curtis stooped and kissed the beaming little face, and then called to Miss Forrester:

"Do you hear what this child of mine is saying?"

Miss Forrester hurried into Hope's bedroom, asking:

"What new and wild outbreak have we today? I can see she will soon require a governess in place of a nurse. She is getting quite beyond *our* control. Now little Daisy Maiden, confess: What have you been saying to your mother to make her summon me to bring you to order?"

"Can't tell you. No, not one word. By and by I shall *show* you," and a happy little

laugh bubbled to Hope's lips as Miss Forrester and her mother assisted her to her bathroom, where good Lizette was awaiting her. Half an hour later the lovely curls were glinting from Lizette's deft brushing, and Hope was lovely in her dainty white frock. Then came luncheon with her father and mother in the big dining-room, to which she could now go whenever she chose.

Saito, calm and attentive as ever, served as usual, though both Mr. and Mrs. Curtis were impressed by his silence and gravity. As a rule he had been all smiles and bows, or, if spoken to, delighted to reply in his funny broken English. Now only monosyllabic replies were made to Mr. Curtis' kindly greeting and words. He looked at Saito more than once when the little man was unaware of his glances and wondered what was the cause of his unusual seriousness, resolving to question him later, for Saito's welfare and happiness lay close to this kindly man's heart. Just now, however, he was too filled with delight

by Hope's merry mood and evident advancement toward the hoped-for strength, which would make the Annapolis trip possible, to think long of aught beside.

Luncheon ended, Saito drew back Mr. Curtis' chair who rose and went to his wife's, —a little courtesy he never omitted—, while Saito hastened to Hope's and drawing it gently back, offered her her crutches.

With a smile which he never forgot, she waved them gently aside, rose unaided to her feet and walked slowly but with perfect balance and steadiness around the circle of the great table toward her father and mother.

Mrs. Curtis gave a little cry and sank back upon her chair. Mr. Curtis exclaiming: "Gracious God!" sprang toward her, his arms outstretched. Saito with hands clasped stood white and rigid as though turned to stone.

CHAPTER XXI

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

Twilight was softly falling upon that still May evening. Dinner had been served, and Hope and her father were swinging gently to and fro in the big lawn swing in the garden. Even the noises of the city beyond the ivy covered walls enclosing the garden seemed hushed. Mrs. Curtis had gone indoors only a moment before to receive a neighbor, who called to bid her good-bye upon the eve of departing for Europe.

Hope and her father had been talking over the wonderful events of that afternoon. Of the moment she had risen from her chair and walked toward him. How Miss Forrester who had been hastily summoned to see the miracle, had phoned for Dr. ———, who hurried to the house as fast as his motor car

could bring him, and upon his arrival had re-assured them by saying he was not at all surprised; that he had expected it, and felt sure that his patient would astonish them before long by doing a Marathon run for their benefit,—such strides had she made during the past three months. His only caution was: “Make haste slowly, little girl.”

Every member of the household had to be called to see this miraculous feat, until Hope had laughingly said that she was quite as big a “show” as the Hippodrome, only she had all the glory and credit to herself. Never had there been such rejoicing in this home. From Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, straight down to Bridget the cook and Michael, who having seen with his own eyes the miracle which had come to pass in this household, where he had served for more than twenty years, straightway betook himself to his church to offer a fervent prayer of thanks to the Virgin, whose blessing he firmly believed Hope’s restored strength to be.

And now in the twilight, nestled in her father's arms, Hope said:

"Daddy, dear, I want to tell you something more, but it must be a secret between just you and me; not another single person must share it."

"Excepting Mother, of course," said Mr. Curtis, a note of conviction in his voice.

Hope reached up one hand in the little way so native to her and answered:

"Daddy, please, no one but you and me. I can't even tell you all of it now. May be I shall some day, but in honor I can't now. Will you trust and believe me, Daddy?" The words were sweetly persuasive. It would have been hard to deny such a request. Nor did Mr. Curtis for a moment dream of the weight of the promise he would make.

"I'd promise the half of my kingdom to-night, Sweetheart. It shall be as you wish."

Then, there in the lovely spring twilight, close nestled in her father's arms, Hope told of her dream, and how she had walked in her

sleep, waking to find herself in the library at half past two o'clock in the morning. How Saito had found her there, and helped her safely back to her room without waking, or startling any one, and how she had again dropped asleep, and slept until nearly nine o'clock. All this, yet no word of Saito's scheme or even a hint which would reflect the slightest discredit upon him, or little Delight Chickeley, far away in England; the little sister whom Saito so loved, and for whom his sore heart yearned every moment he lived. The only blood kin he could claim upon earth, and from whose presence the conventions of her father's race debarred this Japanese half-brother.

How carefully she chose her words, this little girl who felt that she held in her keeping the honor of one who had loved and served her, even though he had, during that very time, been laying plans which, had they succeeded, would have brought pain and dishonor to her very own. But that was all past

now, and she must not let the little half-English sister ever suspect what her half-brother had planned. No; no one on earth must dream of it.

“And once more we have Saito to thank for being near at a crucial moment.” exclaimed Mr. Curtis. “Can I ever repay his devotion to us? But how strange that he should have been awake at that hour, and should have heard you. Truly, the dear Lord had you in his care, my little one. While we who should have been upon the alert every instant were sleeping, one upon whom we have not the slightest claim, was at hand to protect you. What can I do to show my gratitude? No wonder he has been so silent all day. Mother and I noticed it and commented upon it. No, I shall not tell her; it would only needlessly alarm her, and she has had quite enough to tax her nerves already. My precious little daughter, thank God no harm came to you in those silent watches of the night,” and Mr. Curtis kissed the dear face upon his shoulder.

They sat in silence for a few moments and then there came the faintest sound behind them, and Saito glided around the end of the swing and stood before them, with head bowed.

Mr. Curtis checked the motion of the swing and rose to his feet. Neither then remembered that the window of the room assigned to Saito opened just above where the swing stood. Laying his hand upon Saito's shoulder Mr. Curtis said with a strange catch in his voice: "Saito, again you have served us beyond our power to repay. Miss Hope has just told me the story of last night."

For a moment Saito made no reply, then gently removing Mr. Curtis' hand from his shoulder, he said in words so free from the slightest accent that Hope's father's eyes filled with amazement.

"No, Mr. Curtis, not all. The strangest part of it, the most incredible and the most beautiful, I shall tell you. I have been there in my room: I heard all; not because I chose

to listen, but because I could not help hearing. I am now thankful I heard. It is for me to tell all, all. It is for the honor which my beloved Yoshi-Ko has taught me; the honor which will gain where my ideas of honor would have meant ultimate dishonor. I can now see it. Last night opened my eyes. And that honor I now give into your keeping. You will understand even as my little Sun Princess understood last night. Next to my own little Etsu she holds my love, my endless devotion, whether I am near her or far, far away. May I speak?"

Mr. Curtis bowed his consent, too astounded even for words. Then the story of the night's experiences was told. Tears stood in Mr. Curtis' eyes before it ended. What a night for this little daughter! One whom he had regarded as a mere child. But, under all ran a thrill of pride. She had met the test of a great emergency as every Curtis before her had met such, and, please God, would ever meet those coming to them.

When Saito finished he stood silently awaiting his hearer's next words. Mr. Curtis held out his hand. With a look of surprise and intense gratitude Saito laid his in the big strong one.

"Saito from now on it must be as friends—no longer master and servant. That is ended. For a few days, perhaps, the masquerade must continue for your own sake. Then you will be suddenly called to Washington. Do you understand? Go, and await my coming. Meanwhile perhaps you can find some one to take your place here. None save ourselves shall ever know of the past twenty-four hours. When you reach Washington wait for me at the Willard. After my son's graduation I shall join you there, and a position of trust shall be obtained for you where your ability will tell. I have many friends in the Diplomatic circle. Meantime believe in me and"—Mr. Curtis smiled—Your 'Yoshi-Ko'. We shall always love the name and it will never be forgotten by us. Your 'Lovable Little

Lady.' It is a very tender appellation. You have taught us many things, and I think she, also, has taught you the greatest lesson of your life; the one upon which all your future happiness and success will rest. The lesson which our great Lord Shaka, whom we call our Christ, has taught his followers: To love another better than we love ourselves. May He guard and keep you," and Saito's hand was once more warmly pressed.

"I thank you, and my gratitude is yours forever. I shall obey implicitly. Henceforth it shall be the teachings of thy Lord Shaka and my Hinohime," and bowing, Saito turned and raised Hope's hand to his lips. A moment later he was gone.

Mr. Curtis turned and gathering Hope into his arms carried her into the house.

Three days later Saito bade the family good-bye, having installed Kozo in his place. At first it was hard for the household to adjust itself to the sudden change, but other matters more absorbing filled every heart with joy.

The little Daisy Maiden had discarded her crutches for all time, it seemed. True, she never stirred without some one being close at hand, but from that wonderful night she walked unaided. Slowly, it is true, but surely, and each day with greater strength and confidence.

And so passed the lovely month of May until the twenty-fifth arrived, bringing with it the event of Hope's life, the departure for Annapolis to see Raymond graduate on June seventh.

We cannot tell all the delightful happenings of that journey, or of the summer which followed. Something must be left over for "Hope's New World", but we can hint at a launch party up the Severn River on Memorial Day, when she renewed her acquaintance with Toots, Tubby and Dicky. Of the picnic in the sweet, green woodland, when Hope and Dicky found a few moments in which the boy had time to say:

"The dream came true, didn't it, little

sister? I have thought of it so many times since and the awful ending of that day on the lake. I hope I may never live through such another, not even for the sake of enjoying such a happy time as went before."

"Ah, but it was all just right after all. Don't you see that it was?" smiled Hope. "And you know there was no pain for me: Just nothing for a long, long time but waiting. And now it is just as—as—the dream promised. Oh, Dicky, it seems too good to be true. Too good! And I am so happy. So happy."

Then followed the delights and excitement of June Week, with drills and dress-parades, and oh, wonder of wonders! and surprise of surprises! Raymond's Company won the Colors, and Hope was chosen to present them. The contest had been a close one, and not decided until the very last moment, but at length it was settled in favor of the Eighth Company, and the honor of presenting the

beautiful silken flags to Raymond, it's Captain, fell to Hope.

Could such another day ever come? Could such an hour of overwhelming pride and happiness ever be hers? Leaning upon the arm of the Superintendent of the Academy she walked out upon the great Parade Ground before the vast audience of people gathered upon the seats which lined it, and met Raymond as he advanced to receive the flags which the Color Bearers each in turn placed in her hands, the whole Brigade of Midshipmen standing at attention in a line which stretched entirely across the parade ground?

She had prepared a little speech for this great occasion, but at the last moment only love and joy filled her heart and mind and she said:

"Oh, Raymond, Raymond, I am so happy, so proud, that I can't say anything but God bless the dear, dear flag and, you, and make you the most splendid, and bravest officer in the Service!"

What a joyous, inspiring ring there was to the words.

Then what a cheer went up for the girl, the colors, and the company, and Hope walked back to the Reviewing Pavilion radiant as the afternoon sunlight.

At night came the class German, which she saw from the gallery of the Gymnasium, and the following afternoon graduation exercises in the vast bunting-decked Armory, with the President of the United States to address the graduating class, and present the diplomas to the newly commissioned Ensigns.

When Raymond's was placed in his hands Hope gave a little cry, and clapped hers so vigorously that the little white kid gloves split from wrist to finger.

When it was all over, and the dignitaries of the day had marched solemnly out, the graduates rose to their feet and sang their class song, but as the last strain died away pandemonium broke loose. Quickly falling in line they formed for the Snake Dance,

invariably the grand finale of graduation. Down the Armory they wound and circled to the rollicking strains of "Out of the Wilderness", played by "Zimmie's" Band, tossing their caps, now discarded forever for the caps of the full-fledged officer, wildly into the air. And many a mad scramble was made by feminine friends to secure one as a souvenir of this eventful day. Dicky rescued Raymond's and presented it to Hope with a grand flourish: Dicky now the dignified second-classman. Perish the youngster with his one diagonal stripe! Now *two* would adorn his forearm.

And that night came the great Farewell Ball given to the graduating class by the New First Class. A glorious, glittering spectacle upon which Hope could look, but alas! not dance. But Dicky, the optimistic, removed even a suggestion of regret by saying:

"Never mind, little foster-sister. It's something to just *be* here, isn't it?"

"It's everything!" responded Hope enthusiastically.

"Better believe it is. And, listen here: In two years *I'll* be graduating and by that time you've got to be strong enough to dance our German with me. Do you hear? Is it a bargain?"

"If I am strong enough do you really want me to?"

"Do I? Well! Is it a go?"

"It will be too lovely for any words to tell about, and I'll make haste to grow strong just as fast as I can, and learn how to dance so well that you won't be ashamed of me."

"I could never be ashamed of you if we had to walk through every figure," was the gallant reply.

And here we must bid Hope good-bye until we can greet her once more in Hope's New World.

FINIS

GIRLS' LIBERTY SERIES

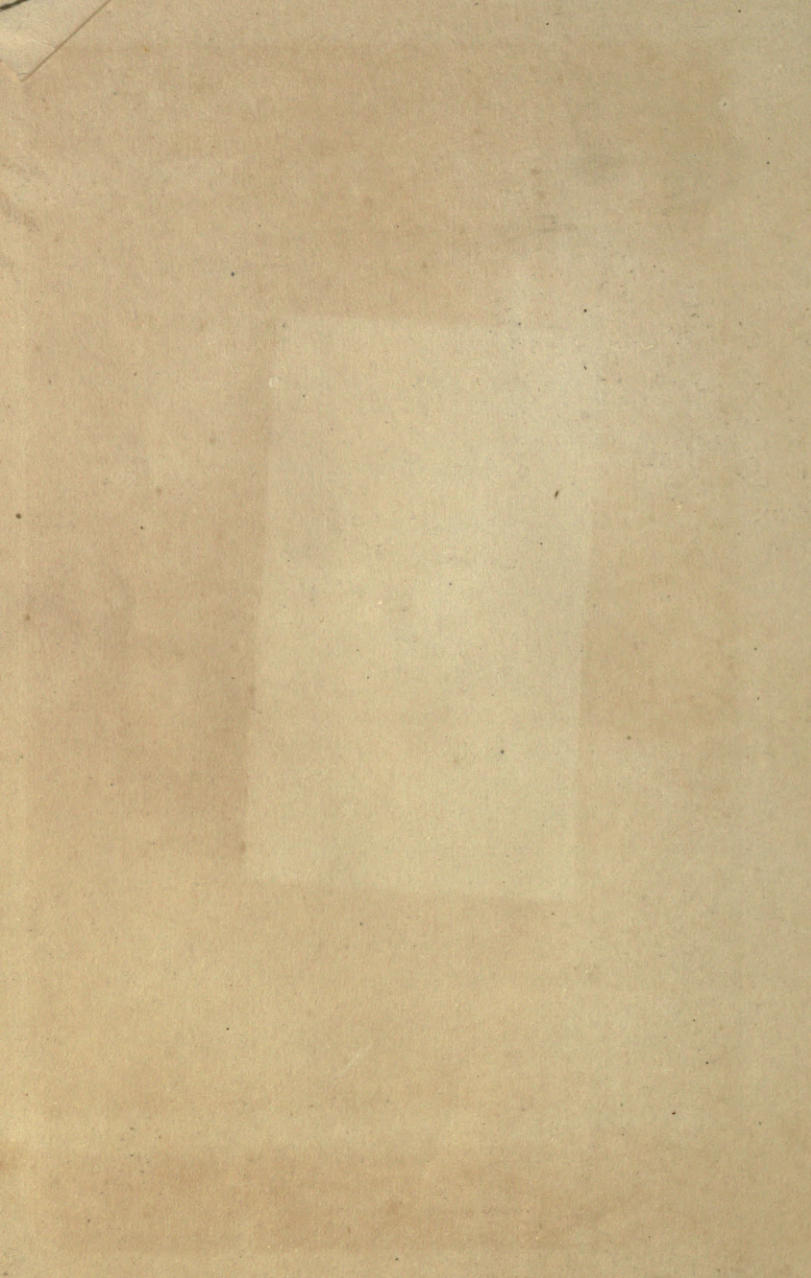
Contains an assortment of attractive and desirable books for girls by standard and favorite authors. The books are printed on a good quality of paper in large clear type. Each title is complete and unabridged. Bound in clothene, ornamented on the sides and back with attractive illustrative designs and the title stamped on front and back.

12mo, clothene. Price 50c each.

1. Camp Fire Girls on a Long Hike, or,
Lost in the Great Northern Woods.....Stella M. Francis
2. Daddy's Girl.....Mrs. L. T. Meade
3. Ethel Hollister's First Summer as
a Camp Fire Girl.....Irene Elliott Benson
4. Ethel Hollister's Second Summer.....Irene Elliott Benson
5. Flat Iron for a Farthing.....Mrs. Ewing
6. Four Little Mischiefs.....Rose Mulholland
7. Girls and I.....Mrs. Molesworth
8. Girl from America.....Mrs. L. T. Meade
9. Grandmother Dear.....Mrs. Molesworth
10. Irvington Stories.....Mary Mapes Dodge
11. Little Lame Prince.....Mrs. Muloch
12. Little Susie Stories.....Mrs. H. Prentiss
13. Mrs. Over the Way.....Julianna Horatio Ewing
14. Naughty Miss Bunny.....Rose Mullholland
15. Sweet Girl Graduate.....Mrs. L. T. Meade
16. School Queens.....Mrs. L. T. Meade
17. Sue, A Little Heroine.....Mrs. L. T. Meade
18. Wild Kitty.....Mrs. L. T. Meade

For sale by all Booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of 50c

M. A. DONOHUE & COMPANY
711 S. DEARBORN STREET CHICAGO



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 124 342 7



